



HEART-SONGS

HENRY WESTON FROST

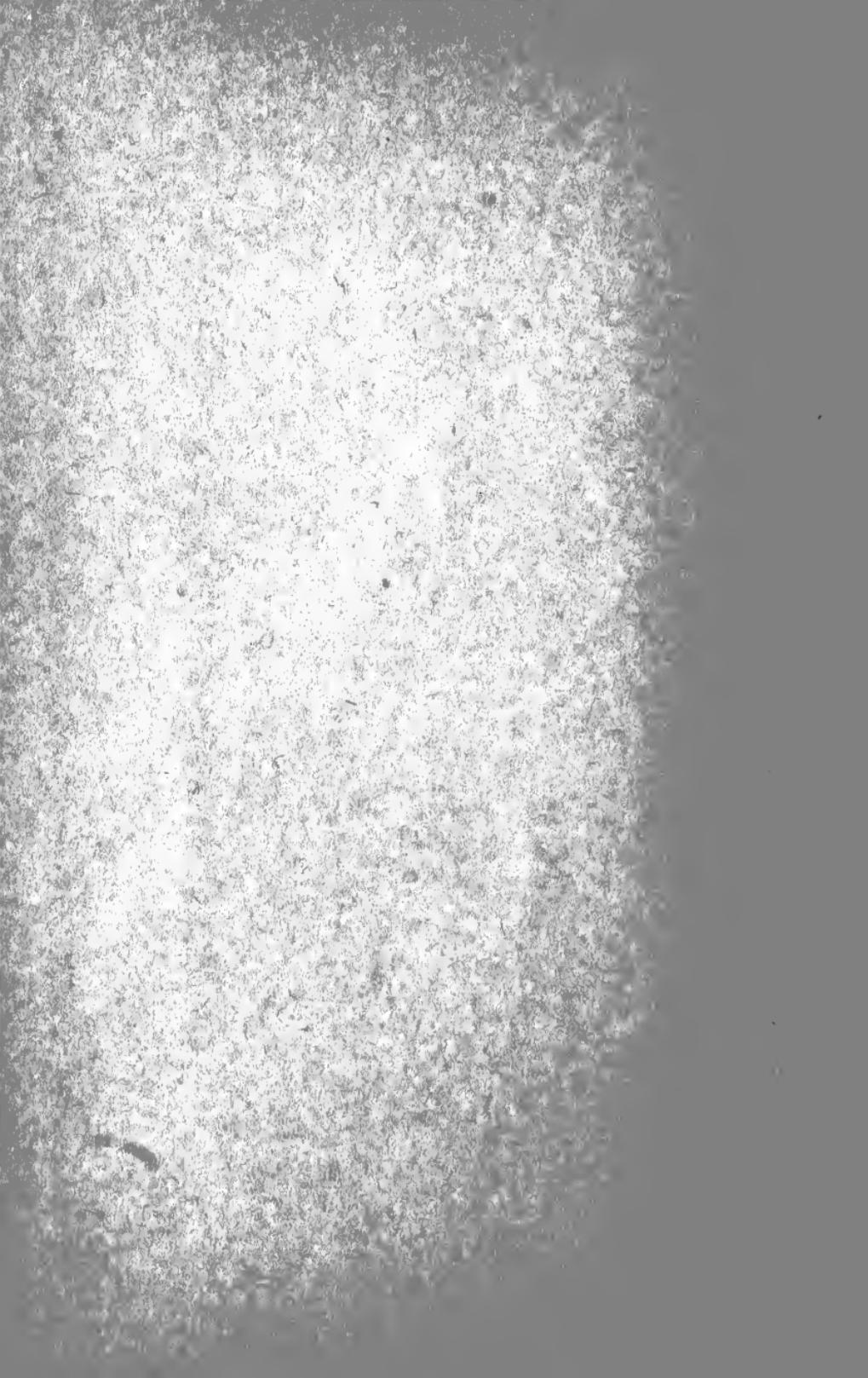


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HEART SONGS

Verses for Christians

BY

HENRY WESTON FROST

"Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord"



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DEDICATION

Long years ago, one day in sunlit May,
There burst forth from my heart a spring-time
song;
I knew not whence it came, but I dared pray
That God would take my words, nor deem them
wrong;
For all was fair that day, below, above,
And I had sung my song in praiseful love.

The years have passed, and I have oft-times sung,
In other springs, and through long winters too,
When joys were full, and e'en when tears were
wrung
From heart and eyes because life's joys were
few;
What could I do but sing since Christ was mine?
Love must praise such as He, through cloud and
shine.

Some frowned displeasure; some more kindly smiled
But thought them folly—these my humble lays;
This too I deem them, though they were beguiled
By love that could not still its tuneful praise:
And—since I love—with spirit bowed and awed,
I lay my folly at the feet of God!

1916.



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HEART SONGS

SPRING SONG

"All thy works praise thee."

Breathe, birds, thy sweetest songs,
Take, fields, thy brightest sheen,
Fair as the morn appears
The coming of earth's Queen.

Each weed and flower feels
New thrills of her sweet grace;
Hid springs and brooks reflect
The beauty of her face;

And human hearts are filled
With light of joy and love,
From thee, O Queen below,
To Thee, O King above!

1881.

NIGHT SONG

"Thou makest darkness, and it is night."

From the glare of noontide
Day now seeks its rest,
Hiding sunset blushes
On Night's loving breast;

And the stars in heaven,
Opening wide their eyes,
Watch in faithful guarding
Till the morning's rise.

Sweet and deep contentment
From the night wind flows;
Hearts forget their sorrows,
Tired eyelids close.

Welcome, blessed nightfall;
May thy sweet release
Bring to all the weary
Thoughts of heaven's peace!

1881.

BIRD SONGS

"The time of the singing of birds is come."

At morn's first dawning-tide I heard
The birds breathe forth their waking song,
And I forever would prolong
The praise which in my heart was stirred.

Through all the sunny hours of day
Their voices praised for every good;
Oh, that my heart, unfailing, could
Accord as well its thankful lay!

The daylight passed; eve's holy calm
Fast deepened into darker night;
But, from the midst of fading light
Uprose the birds' sweet even-psalm.

So would I ever, ever sing,
As true, as free, as full a song;
Alike through trial, sorrow, wrong,
May praises from my heart upspring!

1883.

THE LORD'S DAY

"In the Spirit on the Lord's day."

Sweet day of Christ, earth's perfect peace,
Blest token of the yonder life;
From thy bright light, man's sinful strife
Flees far, and bids earth's darkness cease.

Calm of the soul, storm-tossed and driven,
Through days of doubt and dark despair;
Sweet promise that the nearing There
Will bring the calm of sins forgiven.

Then peace, my soul; thy turmoil still;
Put far away the troubled mind;
In this day's holy quiet, find
The rest which heaven will fulfil!

1882.

MY CHOICE

"I have chosen the way of truth."

Let who will, in lordly splendor,
Ride through highways, fair and broad;
I would, humbler, choose the byway,
And there, serving, walk with God!

1883.

FAME

"The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."

Who stoops to trace his name upon the sands
May rise to see it vanish as he stands;
Who cuts his name upon the firmer clay
May hope to see it last a single day;
Who carves his name upon the harder stone
May find it there until new moss has grown;
Who leaves his name upon the heart of man—
Give time of ending, whosoever can!

1883.

INCITEMENT

"Seek those things which are above."

(To a friend, with a copy of religious poems.)

As birds in summer teach their wee-fledged things,
By many a flutter and oft sounded call,
To mount the nest and dare a weakling's fall,
That, after, they may soar on strengthened wings;
So may these thoughts of pure and guiding song,
In earnest call to dare the right endeavor,
Uplift thy soul into the great forever
Of highest purpose, made by action strong.

1883.

A MOTHER'S REVERIE

"Can a woman forget her child?"

Breathe, breathe, O blessed breeze,
Bring the cold earth glad summer's heat and showers,
Bring song of birds and hum of busy bees,
Bring early blossoms and the fragrant flowers;—
Yet thou canst nothing bring so sweet and fair
As my dear Baby's beauteous face and hair!

Cease, cease, O cheerless cloud;
Hide 'neath the hills which guard the eastern view,
Leaving no shred, torn from thy trailing shroud,
To gloom the fair expanse of sunlit blue;—
Yet not above is there such blue as lies
In the sweet heaven of my Baby's eyes!

Shine, shine, O sparkling sea;
Flash the bright jewels on thy heaving breast;
Or, stilled to peace, all calm and silent be,
A glowing pathway to the golden west;—
Yet fairer, sweeter, purer far, the while,
Is the bright glory of my Baby's smile!

Guard, guard, O gracious God;
Guard Thou my Babe, my precious Babe, and me;
Make strong his feet to walk paths yet untrod,
Keep calm my heart, whate'er his lot may be;
So, if Thou ask of me Thy gift again,
I'll yield my Babe, and yielding, not complain!

1883.

REST

"I will give you rest."—"Ye shall find rest."

(The song of a converted mendicant monk.)

At rest in Jesus! Weary feet
Shall toil no more through mart and dusty street
In works of penance, while in grave-clothes bound,
Thrusting unholly steps on holy ground!

At rest in Jesus! Ah, my heart,
How oft in works of merit thou didst start
To find that self-done deeds in ashes fell
Consumed within by some swift flame of hell!

At rest in Jesus! Nevermore
To con the weary lesson o'er and o'er;—
The lesson learned; behold, I find my rest,
My head laid down upon my Savior's breast!

At rest in Jesus! As I stand,
His smile lets fall the light of glory-land;
Before—myself and sin! O Christ, 'tis sweet
To rest in Thee, and so find rest complete!

At rest in Jesus! Now I go
Through mart and dusty street, not fast, nor slow;—
I walk with Christ at rest; in Him I've found
The right to humbly serve on holy ground!

1887.

LORD JESUS, COME

“Surely, I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

Weary of earth and longing to be free,
Upward I look, and wait, dear Lord, for Thee;
Hark to my cry, and answer this my plea:—
E'en so, Lord Jesus, do Thou quickly come!

I do not doubt Thy love, Thy care divine,
Peace, joy, communion, all in Thee are mine,
But here on earth, for sin I e'er repine;—
E'en so, Lord Jesus, do Thou quickly come!

Empowered by Thee, I press through every fray,
Thou art my strength and safeguard day by day;
Yet long and rough and weary is the way;—
E'en so, Lord Jesus, do Thou quickly come!

Blest is the Spirit's tender comforting,
Yea, by His power, to Thee my praise I sing,
But oh, to see Thee, Thou who art my King;—
E'en so, Lord Jesus, do Thou quickly come!

Haste then, dear Lord; I long and wait for Thee,
Come for Thine own, that I Thy face may see,
And at Thy side, may dwell eternally;—
E'en so, Lord Jesus, do Thou quickly come!

1887.

LONGINGS FOR CHRIST

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Jesus, Savior, I would be
Ever holy, like to Thee;
Free from sin of every kind,
In Thy purity confined.

Jesus, Savior, by Thy power,
Cleanse and keep me, hour by hour;
This my longing, and my plea—
Make me more and more like Thee.

Jesus, Savior, by Thy grace,
Show me thus Thy lovely face;
Naught between, the veil away,
Let me gaze on Thee alway!

Jesus, Savior, in Thy love,
Bring me to Thyself above,
With Thee, like Thee, to abide,
Face to face, and satisfied!

1893.

OUT OF THE DEPTHS

*"Out of the depths have I cried unto thee,
O Lord!"*

I

Out of the depths, O Lord,
I cry to Thee;
Oh, let me hear Thy word
Restoring me!

Farther and farther still
My feet have strayed,
Downward and downward till
I'm sore afraid.

The way has darker grown
And ills betide,
I wander all alone
With none to guide.

Darting through chilling air,
The lightnings flash,
And, following fearful glare,
Loud thunders crash.

Beneath are chasms deep,
And all about
Dread demons dart and leap
And laugh and shout.

I try to pray—but fears
Quench prayers in death;
My only prayers are tears
And bated breath;

But, from my stricken heart,
Goes up a cry
To Thee, O Lord, who art
Watching on high:

Out of the depths, O Lord,
I cry to Thee;
Make speed to help afford,
And succor me!

II

Out of the depths I cried
To God on high;
He in His mercy wide,
Brought mercy nigh;

For, from His throne above,
In power and might,
Fell the blest words of love:—
“Let there be light!”

And from the darkness broke
Before my sight—
As the first morn awoke—
The glory-light.

Lifted from dread abyss
By mighty Hand,
I stood where sunbeams kiss
The grass-clad land;

Where streams flow soft and still
And flowers bloom,
The balmy air to fill
With sweet perfume;

Where songs of birds are heard
In tuneful lays,
And grateful hearts are stirred
To fervent praise.

Gone was my sorrow now
And all my fears;
Smoothed was the troubled brow
And dried my tears.

Now, prayer was breathed once more,
My sins confess,
And could its love out-pour
In freedom blest.

Ah, the communion deep!
And oh, the bliss!
No heart could ever keep
A joy like this!

Praise upon praise I sang
In notes prolonged,
Till list'ning echoes rang
With praises thronged.

Out of the depths I cried
To God on high;
He in His mercy wide,
Brought mercy nigh!

1895.

COMFORTED

"The God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation."

As a fond mother, when the daylight fades
And evening deepens into shadowy night,
Soothes her tired child, within the gath'ring shades,
By lullaby and her sweet presence bright;

So God our Father, in His wondrous grace,
When shadowing sorrows cover all our sky,
Draws near with tender word and shining face
And calms our fears, while in His arms we lie.

Then, O my Father, I would ever choose
Whatever grief or pain Thou sendest me;
Better o'erwhelming sorrows than to lose
The joy of being comforted by Thee!

1895.

FOR ME

"Who gave himself for me."

On Calvary's cross my Savior died,
With pierced hands, and feet, and side;
For me He was the crucified;
Even for me!

He lay within the fast-closed tomb
And entered Hades' prison-gloom;
He bore for me this death and doom,
Even for me!

He rose triumphant o'er the grave,
And by His high ascension gave
The proof for me that He would save;
Even for me!

Enthronèd at His Father's side,
A priest forever to abide,
He prays for me, whate'er betide;
Even for me!

For me He gave the Spirit's dower,
That I might have His mighty power,
And live to serve Him every hour;
Even for me!

Soon He will come, and I shall be
With Him for all eternity;
Yea, He will come for even me;—
Even for me!

1895.

MY LORD AND KING

"Lord of lords, and King of kings."

Jesus, my Lord and King,
To Thee my gift I bring,
Worthy Thou art;
Finding in Thee my rest,
In Thee supremely blest,
I give Thee what is best—
My yielded heart!

Jesus, my Lord and King,
Accept my offering,
 Thee I adore;
No other lord shall be
Lord of my life, but Thee;—
Thou shalt reign over me,
 For evermore!

Jesus, my Lord and King,
To Thee alone I cling
 For life and power;
Thy hand dost me uphold,
Thine arms do me enfold,
Thou dost give strength untold,
 For each glad hour!

Jesus, my Lord and King,
To Thee my praise I sing,
 Only to Thee;
Since Thou by love divine
Hast won this heart of mine,
Its praises shall be Thine,
 Eternally!

Jesus, my Lord and King,
When I shall upward wing
 My heav'nward way,
Low at Thy feet I'll fall,
Thee, King of kings to call,
And crown Thee Lord of all,
 Through endless day!

1895.

SATISFIED

"Satisfied with favor."

Satisfied and full of favor,
By my King I stand,
Having blessings without number
From His opened hand;
Oh, the richness of His treasure,
Oh, the greatness of His measure,
Oh, the fulness of my pleasure,
As His gifts expand!

Satisfied and full of favor,
By my Lord Divine,
Safe I am, His banner o'er me,
"Love," its fair design;
Oh, the rest of His providing,
Oh, the peace fore'er abiding,
Oh, the love and sweet confiding
'Tween His heart and mine!

Satisfied and full of favor,
By my Lord and King,
I would give Him gifts of praises,
Love's best offering;
Oh, the joy of Him adoring,
Oh, the bliss of heart-outpouring,
Oh, the soul's glad, free up-soaring,
As His praise I sing!

Satisfied and full of favor;
In a little space,
I shall stand still closer to Him,
With Him face to face;

Oh, the sudden, homeward fleeting,
Oh, the long-expected meeting,
Oh, the rapture of the greeting,
In that upper place!

1896.

EVENSONG

"And now the eventide was come."

The day with all its toil is ended,
Fast fall the shades of stilly night,
The calm of heaven with earth is blended
And, e'en at even, it is light.

The birds now cease their good-night singing,
The sounds of earth fast die away,
Soft vesper bells, their sweet notes ringing,
Call sons of men to praise and pray.

The cattle homeward go a-lowing,
The bleating sheep turn toward the fold,
Now grateful saints, their praise o'erflowing,
Recount their mercies new and old.

The glittering stars their watch are keeping,
Like guardian angels hovering near,
Sad sons of sorrow cease their weeping
And burdened souls lose all their fear.

Oh, day of glad and blessed ending!
Oh, even-time of restful calm!
May thy sweet peace from heaven descending
Awake each eve new prayer and psalm;

Till days are past and heaven's long even
Falls soft and sweet upon the soul,
When, in the calm of rest full-given,
Men voice their praise as ages roll!

1901.

BETHLEHEM

"And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor."

(After a visit to Bethlehem, one bright day in spring.)

I

O Bethlehem, sweet Bethlehem,
To thee my song I sing,
To thee I raise my humble lay,
Thou city of the King;

Above thy courts the angels sang
Their brightest seraph-song,
And, faintly echoing their refrain,
I would their praise prolong.

II

I see thy wide and wooded fields,
Thy rocky slopes and hills,
Thy valleys deeps, where waters flow
In sparkling, tuneful rills.

Thy balmy air is rich with scent
Of olive and of vine,

Thy trees hang low with ripened fruit,
Thy vats o'erflow with wine.

Thy shepherd boys, like David, lead
Their flocks with winsome call
Across the uplands bright, or through
Deep vales where shadows fall.

Thy dusky men and ruddy maids
Scattered across the plain—
Where Ruth once followed Boaz's men—
Harvest the golden grain.

Thy mothers hush their babes to rest
With hymns of David's Lord,
They sing how in yon cave He came
To heavenly love afford;

And all is fair and all is joy
About thy well-kept walls;
Yea, sorrows never touch thy gates,
Thy hearthstones and thy halls;

Beyond is darksome Calvary
And sad Gethsemane;—
But shadows flee, bright Bethlehem,
When shadows come to thee!

III

Lo, as I gaze, a vision breaks;
Behold, I see the Child
Lie once again in cave of stone
All pure and undefiled;

The virgin-mother bends above,
Watching the face divine,
From which, all fair and beautiful,
Bright rays of glory shine;

While holy angels, gathered round,
With reverent, rapturous gaze,
Bend low the knee, all worshipping,
And chant sweet hymns of praise;

And oh, what longings fill my soul,
As I behold my Lord!—
I fall and worship at His feet,
My every sin abhorred;

And here I pray to be like Him,
Yea, like an infant-child,
All meek and gentle, sweet and good,
All pure and undefiled!

IV

The vision passes;—not the Christ,
Nor Bethlehem ever blest;
Ah, thee I love, thou city fair,
In thee I find my rest;

And so to thee, O Bethlehem,
My song of love I sing;
All praise to thee, sweet Bethlehem,
Thou city of my King!

1901.

ASPIRATION

"Hope maketh not ashamed."

I shot an arrow at the sky,
I thought to fix it fast on high,
I saw it downward fall, and lie
 All broken on the ground;
But I had looked on higher things,
My soul had risen as on wings,
And even yet my hope upsprings
 Toward heaven's eternal bound.

Oft-times our actions fail to rise
To wished-for place within the skies,
And heart is grieved, with sad surprise,
 To see them fall to earth;
But aspiration ne'er is lost,
Though oft with disappointment crost,
For what is left, in spite of cost,
 Gives life a nobler worth!

1902.

MY PILOT

"He will guide us over death."

When I put out to sea,
Into eternity,
 My Pilot will be there;
His hand will hold the helm—
Lest storms should overwhelm—
Till I shall reach the realm
 Where lies my haven fair.

Though darkness shroud the deep
And billows toss and leap,
I shall not be afraid;
My Pilot knows the way
Across the sea's highway,
Through night, to that glad day
Where light will never fade.

And if, perchance, dread fear
Shall draw a moment near,
As storms around me roar,
Above the night-wind's sigh,
I'll hear my Pilot cry:
"Fear not, for I am nigh,"
And I shall fear no more.

The darkness overpast,
I'll reach my port at last
And rest in haven calm;
Brought safely, sweetly through,
I'll thank my Pilot true
And oft my thanks renew
In praise and triumph-psalm.

And so I wait on shore,
My gaze fixed on before,
Across the dark'ning wave;
My Pilot of the sea
Will one day call for me—
Then I shall ready be
And trust his power to save!

THE TRANSFORMED CLAY

"He shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use."

(After seeing a potter at work in Hebron,
Palestine.)

I

A potter sat at his wheel one day,
In a cellar both dark and cold,
Around him in piles lay the plastic clay
 All damp and covered with mould;
In shapeless heaps it lay on the sand,
Awaiting the touch of the master's hand.

The potter's foot turned the wheel around
 Till faster and faster it flew,
With a click and a creak and a whirring sound
 That filled all the cellar through;
Then the potter laid hold on a mass of clay,
Where it lay in the darkness, dull and gray.

The potter's vision was clear and keen
 And his touch was skilful and true,
And the clay which lay in his hands between
 He fashioned and fashioned anew,
Till there on the wheel, before his eyes,
A shapely vessel began to rise.

At last the whirr of the wheel was still
 And the work of the potter was done;
Then the vessel was placed on the outer sill
 In the light of the summer sun;
And there the dull clay of the cellar cold
Stood a beautiful vase, all bathed with gold.

One day there was sound in the narrow street
 Of hoof and of chariot wheel,
 And the king drew near, the potters to greet
 And to ask of his people's weal,
 For none, as he, was so kind and true,
 The length and breadth of the whole land through.

The greetings over, the king passed by,
 Then he turned toward the palace hill;—
 But he suddenly stayed, for his watchful eye
 Had seen the vase on the sill
 Where it stood in the sunlight, slender and fair,
 Finished and fashioned—a work most rare.

The king called the potter and asked his price;
 He paid what was asked, and much more;
 Then he hid his treasure of rich device
 In his bosom, and thus he bore
 The vase to the palace—his coveted prize,
 The joy of his heart and delight of his eyes.

And now if you seek for the cold, dull clay,
 You must pass the old cellar by
 And go up the hill, by the king's highway,
 'Neath the light of the sunlit sky,
 Till you reach the palace of glittering stone,
 Yea, there you will find it—beside the Throne!

1903.

LOST AND FOUND

"Whosoever shall lose his life shall find it."

A spring, high up upon the mountain-side
Straight downward flowed, into the caverned
earth,
From thence in darkness, on and on to glide,
To men, unseen, unknown—of nothing worth.

But hidden there, 'twas fed by rains and snows,
By mountain pool and flowing rivulet,
Till in its cavern-depths its waters rose
Flood-like 'gainst cavern-rocks to leap and fret;

So that at last, down at the mountain's base,
It burst its barriers, coming into light,
A torrent-stream, downward to rush and race
Into the plain, in dashing, rapid flight;

Where broadening out, with slow and peaceful flow,
It moved majestic, toward the waiting sea,
Through peopled lands, to everywhere bestow
The blessings of a rich fertility.

Thus 'tis with man, if once his life is hid—
Small though it be—withn the Life Benign;
Lost, yet not lost, 'tis found, at last, amid
The lives which blessing need—a gift divine.

1903.

THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM

"The Lord is my shepherd."

The Lord is my Shepherd, I never shall want,
He makes me before Him to lie,
In pastures all verdant, of rich, tender grass,
My hunger to well satisfy.
By waters of stillness, He leadeth me forth
That I may find quiet and rest;
He restoreth my soul, and He guideth my feet
In paths that are righteous and blest.
Yea, though I should walk through the valley of
death,
I'll fear neither darkness nor ill,
For Thou art e'er with me, Thy rod and Thy
staff
Will guide me and comfort me still.
Thou preparest a table, and spreadest it full
For me, in the sight of my foes,
Thou anointest my head with sweet-smelling oil,
And my cup, fillèd full, overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy, attending my way,
Will bless me, through life, o'er and o'er,
And in the loved house of Jehovah, my King,
I shall dwell, all secure, evermore!

1906.

DISCOURAGEMENT

*"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me
from the body of this death?"*

What now, my Soul, and hast thou sinned again,
Thou deeply sinful, desperately wicked Soul?
Wilt thou of sinning never have an end?
Wilt never let thy Maker make thee whole?

Thou seemest bound by strong iniquity,
When thou should'st be, once and forever free.

O Soul, wilt thou forever follow on,
Like hound upon the scent, hard after sin?
Like a wild beast, art thou insatiate?
Like a foul demon, hast thou hell within?
Ah, once I thought that thou might'st changèd be;
But thou dost sin, and sin continually!

And yet, O sinful Soul, thou knowest well
That I have struggled hard against thy reign;
As often as I've sinned, I have resolved
That thou should'st never rule o'er me again;
Alas, deceitful Soul, I did not see
That, spite of struggles, thou could'st master me!

What can I do, my Soul? Thou art myself;
I cannot 'scape thy presence nor thy power;
Turn where I will, I feel thy close embrace;
Thou presest hard upon me, hour by hour;—
Oh, that a Master Man might live in me;
Then I should be the man I long to be!

1906.

ETERNITY

"But the things which are not seen are eternal."

Life is young and hearts are beating,
Feet delight to go a-greeting,
Joys and pleasures ever meeting;—
But eternity!

Never sorrow, never crying,
Never pause for even sighing,
Who would ever think of dying?—
 Yet eternity!

Days are bright and all-entrancing,
Hearts are light and eyes are dancing;—
But grim Time is e'er advancing
 Toward eternity!

Midst the pleasures, conscience smarting,
Fear within the heart up-starting,
Time is short and soon the parting,
 Then eternity!

Months to years are ever growing,
Feet will soon be slower going,
Reaping always follows sowing;
 Thus eternity!

Life will pass, for time is fleeting,
One day there must be the meeting;
What will be the yonder greeting
 In eternity?

Here the one chance for the moulding—
Suddenly, dark Death beholding,
Then, long ages, e'er unfolding,
 Through eternity!

Sin is strong in its ensnaring,
Thoughtlessness leads to despairing;—
O my Soul, be thou preparing
 For eternity!

1906.

RESTORED

"He restoreth my soul."

I find it sweet once more to rest
On Jesu's strong and loving breast
And know my sins forgiven;
To be accepted in His grace,
To be upheld by His embrace,
To gaze upon His lovely face
And thus reach home and heaven.

I wandered far, in days gone by,
No light was in my darkened sky,
Around was storm and cold;
And yet my heart forever yearned
For Him whose love I oft had spurned,
Until, all weary, I returned
Like sheep to shelt'ring fold.

One look into His tender eyes,
All filled with love and glad surprise,
And at His feet I fell;
O'ercome with sense of sin and shame,
Half fearing rightful scorn and blame,
I tried my penitence to frame,
My sin and grief to tell.

But not a word would He allow;
He spake, and did His love avow,
His love for even me;
Then, lifting me with outstretched hand,
He made me by His side to stand;—
Who could such wondrous grace withstand,
A grace so rich and free?

And so, in spite of doubts and fears,
My penitence outpoured in tears,
I sank into His arms;
While He close drew me to His side
That I might there fore'er abide,
All safe, whatever might betide,
And free from earth's alarms.

And so, I calmly, sweetly rest
On Jesu's strong and loving breast,
To wander nevermore;
In Him I've found a perfect peace,
A joy and love which e'er increase;—
O Jesu, may I never cease
Thee only to adore!

1907.

MAN'S LIFE

"What is . . . life? It . . . appeareth for a little time, and vanisheth away."

The sun arises from its ocean bed
All clothed with crimson light, a radiant
morn;
Flashing through air to earth its glory-red,
It wakens men to greet the day, new-born;—
From off yon hearth, from newly kindled fire,
The flames leap upward and the sparks mount
higher.

The sun is west'ring, and is sinking low
 Behind the sea's horizon, far away,
Now night has fallen and the night-winds blow,
 Moaning the death-song of departed day;—
Upon the hearth gray ashes lie about;
The last spark's vanished and the fire is out!

1907.

LIFE FROM DEATH

"Though he were dead, yet shall he live."

I strayed, all sad, into the woods one day—
 Midway between the winter and the spring—
Around in scattered drifts the white snow lay,
 O'erhead the mournful crows were on the wing;
All that I saw spoke of decay and death;—
Yet zephyrs stirred soft as a maiden's breath.

Beneath my feet the dead leaves, old and sere,
 Lay like a faded carpet, yellow-gray,
The perished glory of another year,
 The sign that ruthless Death had passed that
 way;
Upon the leaves dead branches lay about;—
Yet pressing through them flowers were springing
 out.

The trees rose up above me, gaunt and bare,
 Uplifting limbs like naked arms to heaven,
Mutely appealing to the sun and air
 That verdure-cov'ring might to them be given;—
And lo! upon their branches could be seen,
Just springing into life, buds red and green.

I sat me down upon a fallen tree,
Made soft by moss, once green, now gray,
To think of years, and life's mortality,
How all things, great and small, must pass
away;—

When suddenly around me, greeting spring,
The birds burst forth in loud, sweet carolling.

And so I learned a lesson that bright day—
Within the wild wood dead, yet touched by
spring—

That all things here below will pass away,
Yet from sad death shall new, glad life up-
spring;

And thus I've come to know, e'en though I die,
That I shall live again in worlds on high.

1907.

CALVARY

*"The place which is called Calvary; there
they crucified him."*

Darkness broods o'er all the earth,
Lo, the Man of heavenly birth
Dies amidst the jest and mirth,
On sad Calvary.

Sinless Son of God is He,
Yet He suffers agony,
Hanging on the cursèd tree,
There on Calvary.

Lo, His head a crown adorns—
'Tis a cruel crown of thorns;

This the taunt of man who scorns,
This, and Calvary!

See Him suffering there alone,
Hear the bitter cry and moan
That for sin He may atone,
On dark Calvary.

Sinks the sun within the west,
Sinks His head upon His breast,
Dies the Man, by men unblest;
Cruel Calvary!

Oh, the darkness of the day,
Oh, the bitter, bitter way,
As grim Death makes Christ his prey;
Awful Calvary!

So they lay Him in the grave,
Him, who gave His life to save,
Him, who all His foes forgave,
On sweet Calvary.

There they lay Him, with my sin,
There they seek to keep Him in,
That He may no vict'ry win,
Through blest Calvary.

But in vain; no death can part
Him and my adoring heart;
Savior, King, O Christ, Thou art!—
Precious Calvary!

1907.

EASTER

"He is not here, but is risen."

O soul of mine, awake, awake,
Slumber no more for Christ's dear sake,
Behold the glorious light doth break
 Of a new Easter day!

Come forth ;—but not with fear and dread,
The darkness of the night has fled ;
Seek not the Living 'midst the dead,
 On this glad Easter day !

Bring not the spices, sweet and rare,
Behold the grave—Christ is not there,
He has arisen, fresh and fair,
 Like this bright Easter day !

Nay, linger not beside the tomb ;
Christ rose from out the morning's womb
To scatter Death's o'ershadowing gloom ;
 Now shines the Easter day !

Yea, shine, bright sun, blow, balmy breeze,
Spring, flowers and shrubs and buds on trees
Sure token of Christ's power are these,
 On this, His Easter day !

Hark, 'tis the Christ who to thee cries,
He calls thee to the radiant skies ;
O heart of mine, arise, arise,
 To heaven's sweet Easter day !

Glad Easter day, so fair and bright,
So full of glory and of might;
O Christ, Thou art its life and light;—
Hail, blessed Easter day!

1907.

SPIRITUAL CONFLICT

“The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.”

(After seeing Barnard's statue, “The Two Natures.”)

Down, deeper down, thou sinful, sensual Self,
Back to low earth from which thou wouldst arise,

Thou robber-fiend, keep thine ill-gotten pelf
Of my misdeeds, it is thy lawful prize;
But henceforth know thou shalt not rule o'er me,
For a sweet Voice calls me to victory.

Up, higher up, thou better, nobler one,
Rise up in strength, with face turned toward the skies,

Faint not, nor fear, the conflict will be won,
Behold, before thee is the victor's prize;
Thy God who calleth thee will strength maintain
And turn all earthly loss to heavenly gain.

1907.

FRIENDSHIP

"There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

To have a friend who follows all my thought
As it may vagrant roam from earth to heaven,
Who there will hold it fast, until its leaven
Is purged away, by purer word in-wrought;
To have him understand when words have failed
To make my better, nobler meaning plain;
Who, when I'm silent, will his words restrain
And show by look that silence hath availed;

To know that he, if others adulate,
Will dare to warn of pride's presumptuous sin,
That he will speak of love, when others hate,
That he, to his strong self, my soul may win:
Such friendship do I crave till life shall end;
And such I have—in Jesus Christ, my Friend!

1907.

A DAY DREAM

"Godliness with contentment is great gain."

A little village 'neath the sheltering hills,
Beside a harbor where ships safely lie,
Where humble toil man's humble need fulfils,
Where life goes calmly on as days go by;
Where hearts are never old,
Where love is never cold,
Where joys are simple, sweet,
Where rest is deep, complete;—
There would I live and die.

To be as one amongst such simple folk,
Myself most blessed, and yet a blessing too,
Bearing with young and old life's daily yoke,
Having the daily, kindly task to do;
Healing the wound that smarts,
Soothing sad, sorrowing hearts,
Guiding in paths untrod,
Leading tired souls to God;—
Thus would I live and die.

A humble village, where, when work is done,
One may, without regret, in quiet be,
Watching, all peaceful, life's slow-setting sun
Shed golden glory over land and sea;
Hearing the evening bell
Its rhythmic story tell
Of life beyond the west,
Of heavenly home and rest;—
There would I live and die.

1907.

WEEPING

"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

(To a friend in deep sorrow.)

Weep, sorrowing one, for God would have thee weep;
He did not make thee stone, but very man,
Yea, He did form thy soul a fountain deep,
Seek not to close it up, weep whilst thou canst,
Yea, weep and weep, weep tears on tears until
Thy weeping heart has ta'en its bitter fill.

Ne'er think thy weeping sin, since Christ did weep,
Who held His life in such long, strong restraint;—

Mark there, at Lazarus' tomb, how tears upleap,
Hear yonder Garden's mournful bitter plaint;
Then sorrow not if grief thine eyes bedim;
As Master, so disciple;—weep with Him.

And yet this learn, weep not amidst the crowd;
Weeping is sacred; shut thy closet door;
There, only there, put on thy mourner's shroud
Where thou mayst speak with Christ and help
implore;
Then, on the breast of Him who weeps with
thee
Pour out thy sorrow's bitterest agony.

And grieve not Christ;—weep not as without hope;
Despair is trustlessness, and, therefore, sin;
However deep thy darkness, never grope,
Lift up thine head and see the Light within;
Weep on, beloved, weep till sorrow's end,
But ne'er forget that Christ is thy good Friend.

Weep, sorrowing one, but e'er remember this:
Weeping shall not endure beyond the night;
There is in store for thee a rapturous bliss,
God's joy will greet thee with the morning light;
Ay, in that morn, no heart will moan or cry,
For God's own hand will wipe each weeping
eye!

1907.

PRAAYER

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

To worship Him who is my Father-God,
In the all-worthy name of Christ, the Son,
Through the blest Spirit, ever Holy One,
Bowing the knee, with heart all hushed and awed;
To come to Him, confessing all my sin,
And seek forgiveness, through the precious blood,
To ask that He, in love's o'erflowing flood,
Will bless my needy life, without, within;
To intercede for all my kinsmen, friends,
For the elect who love our Savior-Lord,
For the great world, e'en to its farthest ends,
That Christ may be by men obeyed, adored;
And then to praise, always and everywhere;—
Be this my fervent and effectual prayer!

1907.

REQUIEM

"We groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption."

The days are hastening, hastening,
They pass away,
The years are wasting, wasting,
They will not stay.

My life is going, going,
'Twill soon be done,
Like rivers, flowing, flowing,
To oceans run.

Life's sun is sinking, sinking,
In dark'ning west,
And I am shrinking, shrinking,
From earth's cold breast.

The end is nearing, nearing,
It comes on wing,
My heart is fearing, fearing,
What death will bring.

Soon I'll be dying, dying,
O God, be nigh,
And hear my crying, crying,
My last, faint sigh;

And grant that, sleeping, sleeping,
I'll wake again,
With no more weeping, weeping,
And no more pain!

1907.

PEACE

"The peace of God." — "The God of peace."

A forest dim and grand, with mile on mile
Of tangled undergrowth and arching trees,
Where sunlight rests upon the matted leaves
But never reaches earth to flowers beguile;
Thére footsteps never fell
To break the silent spell,
There always, all around
Is stillness deep, profound;—
And there is peace.

An ocean's wide expanse, with leagues untold
Of untracked waters, 'neath a tropic sun,
Where every passing day, till day is done,
The sea lies glittering bright, like burnished gold;
There storm-winds never blow,
There storm-waves never flow,
There crystal waters lie
Beneath a cloudless sky;—
And there is peace.

A lake half-hidden near a mountain's crest,
Surrounded by great trees with foliage bright,
O'er which the wild-duck wings his circling
flight,
Near which the eagle builds his lofty nest;
There, 'neath the sun's bright beam,
Wavelets like jewels gleam,
There, lilies white and rare
Perfume the still soft air;—
And there is peace.

A heart all-sensitive, midst city din,
Pressed hard upon by selfish, jostling crowds,
Touched by dark lives which wickedness en-
shrouds,
Forced always, everywhere, to look on sin;
Yet kept by God's great power,
Rejoicing hour by hour,
Uplifting prayer and psalm,
Dwelling in heav'nly calm;—
Ah, *there* is peace!

1907.

PILGRIMAGE

"The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart."

(In imitation of old English poetry.)

I went on pilgrimage one day
To find my Lord, the King,
For I had lost Him in the way
Where worldlings laugh and sing.

Alas! I'd wandered with the throng
Which make life holiday,
And in my mirth had joined their song
And sung their roundelay.

But when my mirth was fully past
And all my singing done—
For careless laughter does not last
And songs die with the sun—

I turned to find my Savior, Lord,
And walk with Him again;—
Ah me, He'd gone whom I adored,
I knew not where, nor when!

For I had grieved Him to the heart
By all my thoughtless way,
And He had turned, and gone apart,
While I kept holiday.

And so I went on pilgrimage
To seek my Savior, Lord;
Naught else could lonely grief assuage,
Naught else could peace afford.

I sought Him in the palace proud,
Within the hovel rude,
I sought Him in the city's crowd,
In desert solitude;

I sought Him in the mart and fair,
In church and cloister dim,
I sought Him, calling everywhere
For Him, and only Him;

I sought, and found not, night and day,
Till strength and hope were gone,
Then, falling to the ground, I lay
With hidden face thereon;

And there beneath the heavy stroke
Of loneliness and fear,
My heart with pain and sorrow broke,
And fell the bitter tear:—

When suddenly I heard a voice
Like that I'd known of yore;
I turned and heard one say, "Rejoice,
And sorrow never more!"

And lo, 'twas Christ, my Lord and King,
Whom I had sought in vain;
Ah, how my heart with joy did sing,
While tears fell fast like rain!

For He had come on pilgrimage
To find His erring child,
My sorrow to fore'er assuage
By His forgiveness mild.

And so He found me in my woe;—
He did not seek in vain:—
O Jesu, may I never go
On pilgrimage again!

1907.

THE HIGHLANDS

"Our citizenship is in heaven."

(After reading Burns's "My Heart's in the Highlands.")

Oh, my heart is in the Highlan's
O' the far and fair countree
Where the King is waitin', waitin'
For His ain, and e'en for me;
There He reigns in a' His glory,
I shall see Him ane sweet day,
When He ca's me to the Highlan's
Wi' Himself for aye to stay.

Ah, my heart was in the Lowlan's
In the aulden, aulden time,
Midst the vapors and the shadows
O' the lower, baser clime;
But the heavenly Man He sought me
An' He deed for me straightwa';
Then He ga'ed back to the Highlan's
An' He bore my heart awa'.

Oh, I love the bonnie Highlan's,
Wi' its pure an' caller air,
Wi' its green fields an' its flowers
An' its fragrance everywhere;

Ay, there's no place like the Highland's
For the soul frae sin set free,
'Tis a lan' o' wondrous beauty,
'Tis the winsome lan' to me.

There's a palace in the Highland's
An' it glistens wi' the licht,
For the sun is ever shinin'
An' there's never, never nicht,
An' there's music in the palace
Sweeter far than a' the soun'
That e'er greets the list'nin' dwellers
On the lower, Lowlan' groun'.

An' enthroned within the palace
Is the King sae pure and fair,
Wi' His garments a' aglist'nin'
An' wi' shinin', snowy hair,
Wi' His face sae bricht, resplendent—
'Bune the brichtness o' His croun—
That before Him a' the angels
An' archangels fa' adoun.

Oh, my heart is in the Highland's,
Sae then dinna bid me stay,
For I canna but be hamesick
For its gowden, blythesome day;
Ay, I'm wearyin' for its beauty,
An' its licht that ne'er grows dim,
For the Ane wha's a' its glory
An' a lastin' sicht o' Him!

1907.

SLUMBER SONG

"Thy sleep shall be sweet."

(On seeing a young child asleep.)

Sleep, sleep, my darling child,
My own, my undefiled,
 Sleep on, sleep on;
Thine eyes must open soon
Upon life's glaring noon,
Sleep then until the day,
Sleep on while yet you may,
 Sleep, sleep, my sweet, sleep on.

Sleep, sleep, my precious one,
Till hours of sleep are done,
 Sleep on, sleep on;
Thy feet have far to go
Through paths of toil and woe,
Thou needest strength on strength,
Then sleep, my child, at length,
 Sleep, sleep, my sweet, sleep on.

Sleep, sleep, my babe adored,
May sleep sweet dreams afford,
 Sleep on, sleep on;
Dreams of a land afar
Past shining moon and star,
Visions all fair and bright,
Outlasting darkest night,
 Sleep, sleep, my sweet, sleep on.

Sleep, sleep, thou child of love,
Thy God doth watch above,
 Sleep on, sleep on;

His eye will never sleep,
He will forever keep,
Thou needest not to fear
For thou art ever dear,
 Sleep, sleep, my sweet, sleep on.

1908.

PRAISE

"Giving thanks always."

Do you hear the angels singing
 Up on high?
Do you hear their voices ringing
 Through the sky?
Oh, the fulness of their song
As their praises they prolong,
Yea, the voices of that choir
 Never tire!

Do you hear the saints all praising
 Round the throne?
Do you hear them hymns upraising,
 One by one?
Praising is their glad delight
So they rest not day nor night,
Crying, "Holy!" o'er and o'er,
 Evermore!

Do you hear the saints adoring
 Here below?
Do you hear them praise outpouring
 Midst earth's woe?

Hark, they sing their sweet refrain
Through their joy and through their pain,
Praising, ever, in their love,
God above!

Oh, then, add your note, rejoicing,
To the praise,
Thanks to God for all things voicing,
Through the days;
Till the earthly singing's done,
Till the heavenly is begun,
Till the anthem, round Christ's feet,
Swells complete!

1908.

A PRAYER

"Give ear to my prayer, O God!"

O Thou who hearest prayer,
Always and everywhere,
Rememb'ring how men fare;
Who, though Thou art on high,
Hearest Thy children cry
And drawest ever nigh;
Hear Thou my prayer, this day—
Draw near me in life's way,
Be Thou my strength and stay;
From blinding sin set free,
May I Thy footsteps see
And ever follow Thee;
On through the length'ning years,
On, spite of foes and fears,
On through the vale of tears;

Till the last hour has come,
Till sinks life's setting sun,
Till the long journey's done;
So may I end my days,
Then be with Thee always,
Where prayer is turned to praise:—
Amen!

1908.

HAVE WE FORGOT

"Now, therefore, why speak ye not a word of bringing the King back?"

(After attending a great missionary convention in which no reference was made to the return of the Lord.)

The King went forth a kingdom to obtain,
With promise to His own to come again;
The long, long years have passed, the years of pain,
And yet He cometh not;—
Have we forgot?

He bade us keep our hearts forever pure,
And, following Him, to suffer and endure,
That we to Him might weary men allure
And He might tarry not;—
Have we forgot?

He asked us for Himself to wait and long,
To turn our faces from the worldly throng
Upward to Him, to whom our lives belong;
And yet He hast'neth not;—
Have we forgot?

And thus the days go by; we joy and sing,
We take His gifts—yet little to Him bring
And speak no word of bringing back the King;
And so He cometh not—
We have forgot!

O Christ our King, forgive us this our sin,
And help us, henceforth, many lives to win,
That we may haste to bring Thy kingdom in;—
And oh, forget us not
Though we've forgot!

1908.

EARTH BOUND

*"Oh, that I had wings like a dove, for then would
I fly away, and be at rest!"*

I cannot rise
To wished-for place within the skies
But I am left to stand
Upon this clod-heaped land,
Pressed down with burd'ning discontent
Because of earth's environment,
Destined to die and sleep
Beneath the sod, so deep
That soon the earth will hold
Myselv turned into mold;
Taken from dust I must
Return, at last, to dust.
The eagle cleaves the topmost sky,
The gull spreads forth his wings on high,
E'en tiny insects mount on strong, swift wings
And look down, from their height, on earthly things;

Yet I, a man,
But can
Walk heavy-footed on this lower earth,
Longing and waiting for a higher birth.
If I had wings
Like the sweet lark that sings,
And as he sings, soars out of sight,
I should take flight
And rise into the heavenly blue;
This I should do
Because I long
To learn the heavenly song
Which those can never know
Who grovel here below;
Yet here on earth I walk
To envy e'en some carrion hawk,
A common thing
And yet on wing,
With wings outspread
Above my head!
Oh, to cast off this heavy weight
Which keeps me in this lower state;
Oh, for strong power to rise and rise
To longed-for place in upper skies!
Hark to the birds on high
Which heavenward fly;
Hark to the glad, pulsating song
Which they in upper skies prolong;
But I can never with them sing
Since I am not on wing;
I can but moan and wait,
Disconsolate:—
And lo, the turtle-dove moans with me from his
nest;
Had I but wings I too should fly away and be at
rest!

MY CREED

"Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief."

That God doth live, enthroned in heaven above,
Existing in three persons, and yet One,
The everlasting Father, Spirit, Son,
Whom I may worship and forever love;
That Jesus died for me on Calvary's tree
And then ascended to His Father's throne,
Thenceforth to ever intercede for me
Until He comes to gather home His own;
That God hath sent the Holy Spirit down
To keep, to guide, to sanctify, to bless,
So I may wear, at last, a victor's crown
And reign with Christ, who will my name confess;
This—'spite of sin and doubt's o'ershadowing
grief—
This I believe; Lord, help mine unbelief!

1908.

AFTERWARD

"No chastening . . . seemeth joyous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness."

Rain, rain
Beating against the pane;
How endlessly it pours,
 Out of doors,
From the blackened sky;—
 I wonder why!

Flowers, flowers
Upspringing after showers,
Blossoming fresh and fair,
Everywhere;—
Ah, God has explained
Why it rained!

1908.

GOLDEN ROD

"He hath made everything beautiful in his time."

Only a weed, they say, and I suppose 'tis true,
But O, sweet golden rod, I would I were like you,
Gladd'ning strained, weary eyes along the dusty
ways,
Standing all strong and fresh through long, hot
autumn days,
And wearing for bright attire the sunlight's glori-
ous hue;—
Ah me, sweet golden rod, would God I were like
you!

1908.

SHADOWS

"Until . . . the shadows flee away."

The springtime sun burst forth to-day
After the long, dull winter's cold,
Upon the hardened ground it lay
Like furnace-glowing, radiant gold,

It warmed the earth where snow had lain
And following after springtime rain,
It wooed a new life from the old.

The springtime buds sprang forth to-day
On plants and vines and shrubs and trees,
While the glad birds sang roundelay
Amidst the droning of the bees;
Flowers, 'neath the sunlight's golden dower,
Burst forth within a single hour
To cast sweet fragrance on the breeze.

All the great world is bright to-day
And every living thing is glad,
For springtime warmth has come to stay
That all the earth may be new-clad;—
Alas, alas, in spite of spring,
I cannot joy, I cannot sing,
Somehow my heart is dark and sad!

Oh, shame, thrice shame, upon this day
When there is beauty everywhere,
When all the world is blithe and gay
And sunlight flashes through the air,
That shadows o'er my heart should lie—
As clouds o'ershade a sunlit sky—
Turning my joy to dark despair!

Rise, rise, bright Sun, rise high to-day—
Thou brighter Sun than that I see,
Chase all my darkness far away
And let Thy radiance fall on me;
Then shall my heart be glad and sing,
Then shall I joy with everything,
And shadows will forever flee!

SUBMISSION

"Thy will be done."

(After seeing Hofmann's picture, "Christ
in Gethsemane.")

O Jesus Christ, Thou suffering Man of prayer,
Help me in prayer Thy sufferings to share,
That, learning at Thy side, on bended knee,
The deep, sweet lesson of Gethsemane,
I may repeat with Thee—the vict'ry won—
"Not my will, Father, but Thy will be done!"

1908.

WEARINESS

"There the weary are at rest."

Years!
And also fears;
The way is long,
The battle's to the strong,
And I am weak;
I dare not seek
For many years!

Years!
Ay, also tears;
I have been glad,
But far more often sad;
Now life's far past
And what will last
Are wearier years!

Years!
The way appears
A way of gloom;
There seems no resting room
In life below;
Hence, tears will flow
For better years!

Years!
Christ only cheers;
When I shall stand
Safe home at His right hand,
Then it will be
That I shall see
The joy of years!

Years!
Life disappears!—
Ay, let it go
That I may sooner know
The bliss of rest
Among the blest
Through heav'nly years!

1908.

THROUGH DEATH TO LIFE

*"Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one
of these."*

Lo, a lily-blade is springing
Through the soil of Galilee,
Into beauteous life upspringing,
Into joy and ecstasy;—
"Oh," it cries, "how glad the hour
When my leaf will turn to flower."

Lo, a lily-flower is standing
 In a glade of Galilee,
With its petals wide expanding,
 Sweet in whitest purity;—
“Oh,” it cries, “to stand fore’er,
Blooming thus, all bright and fair!”

Lo, a lily-flower is dying
 In a Hand in Galilee,
While a sweet-toned Voice is crying
 In divinest sympathy:—
“Solomon was ne’er arrayed
Like this lily of the glade!”

So the lily died to living
 In the vale of Galilee,
Yea, it died—its sweet life giving
 To the Man of charity;
Then the Man, upon that day,
Smiled upon it where it lay!

Now the lily lies forsaken
 In the dust of Galilee,
Never will its life awaken,
 It has died eternally;—
Yet this lily of the glade
Lives as none God ever made!

1908.

ENSLAVED

"A bond-slave of Jesus Christ."

I

I went into the fields one day
In the sweet beauty of the spring,
My heart was light and glad and gay
And thus I fell to carolling.

I sang of skies of radiant blue,
Of fleecy clouds and balmy air,
Of leaf and grass of softest hue,
Of fragrant flowers divinely fair;

Of great-winged birds afloat on high,
Of song-birds warbling in the trees,
Of bright-hued insects darting by
Of the low drone of swarming bees.

And then I sang, as sang the birds
Which soared within the heavenly
blue,
In loudest, most triumphant words
The sweetest song my full heart
knew.

Of life's glad freedom, now and aye,
Which stirs the heart to joy and sing,
Which makes life one long holiday
And sets the lips to carolling.

"Free, free," I sang, "forever free,
The slave of no one, God or man,
Myself a king, at liberty,
My kingdom all mine eye doth scan!"

But suddenly my singing ceased,
 For there beside the verdant field,
 In midst of crowd—which e'er increased—
 A journeying Stranger was revealed.

He walked along the dusty way
 With smiling face and gentle eye,
 He seemed to hear what each did say
 And seemed to catch the faintest sigh;

And, now and then, He paused to touch
 Some body racked with piercing pain,
 And often He would speak to such
 As seemed fast-bound by Satan's chain;

Then, as He passed, He looked on me—
 He spake no word, He made no sign—
 But smiled in tenderest sympathy
 And fixed His yearning eyes on mine;

And somehow—how I do not know—
 I joined the throng in dusty way
 And followed Him, not fast nor slow,
 But e'er beside Him, day by day;

And somehow—how I cannot tell—
 The toilsome way seemed sweet to me,
 Sweeter by far than dale and dell
 And greenest fields might ever be;

And so, once more, my heart did sing—
 Ay, as it never sang before—
 And thus I fell to carolling
 Of Him whom now I did adore;

And this is what my lips did sing
E'en as I walked in crowded way:—
“I am a slave of Christ my King,
A captive-slave, for now and aye;

“For I have found eternal rest
In trusting His eternal word,
And I have found my life full blest
In hailing Him as Savior-Lord.”

So now I follow, on and on,
Beside the Christ, in dusty way;
Green fields and liberty are gone—
But life is one long holyday!

1908.

THE NAME

“God also hath given him a name which is above every name.”

There is a name, a wondrous name,
Of infinite and endless fame,
By God beloved, by saints revered,
By angels and archangels feared,
Ordained of God 'fore world began,
Revealed by angels unto man,
Proclaimed by men, believed, adored,
By hearts in prayer and praise outpoured,
The theme of prophet, priest and king,
The word of which sweet psalmists sing,
By pilgrims blessed, by suff'rors sung,
The last word breathed by martyr's tongue.

The name most precious and sublime,
Supreme in space, supreme in time,
Destined to live and conquer all
Till all knees everywhere shall fall
And tongues confess—what God proclaims—
This name to be the Name of names,
The name which in high heaven will be
The One Name of eternity;—
Then, O my soul, its praise forthtell,
Jesus—the name ineffable!

1908.

HEART-BREAK

"I adjure you . . . if ye find my beloved that ye tell him that I am sick from love."

I have lost my Love to-day,
Lost Him in the crowded way,
While I turned aside to see
Life in its festivity;—
Oh, to look into His face
And to find His pard'ning grace!

Ah, my heart, how fair this world
When its beauties are unfurled,
How they glitter, dazzle, blind,
How they 'snare the heart and mind!—
Tell me, and oh, tell me true,
Has my Love been seen by you?

I did take my wanton way
With the throngs all through the day,
Seeking pleasures, sweet and rare,
Joyful, without thought or care;

Now 'tis night;—oh, can you tell
Where my grieved Love doth dwell?

Days are long and full of light,
Pleasures sweet and joyance bright;
But the night, how dark and drear
And how full of dread and fear!—
Oh, that I could find my Love,
Then I would no longer rove!

If you see my Love, do you
Tell Him that my love is true,
That grief's tears my eyes bedim
And I seek and call for Him;—
Will you, in sweet charity,
Help to find my Love for me?

Ah, I wander all alone—
Would I could for sin atone,
I would give my very heart,
With my very life would part,
If in giving, dying I
Might but find my Love were nigh!

Hear me, Love—I cry, I moan,
Thee I long for, Thee alone;
If Thou wilt return to me
I will never part from Thee;—
Hear me all, below, above,
Tell my Love, I die from love!

COMMUNION HYMN

"This do in remembrance of me."

O my soul, do thou keep silence,
Here thou meetest with thy God,
Come and feast, in sweet reliance,
But with spirit bowed and awed;
Hush the voice and still the mind,
Here thou wilt thy Savior find.

O my soul, do thou remember
This is sacred, holy ground,
Sign of when Christ's every member
On the cruel cross was found,
There He died in agony;—
Come, then, humbly, gratefully.

O my soul, be thou preparing,
It is Christ who welcomes thee,
Richest blessing with thee sharing,
Foretaste of eternity;
He doth grant thee heavenly food,
Giving thee His flesh and blood.

O my soul, thy sins forsaking
In remembrance of Christ's love,
From this food new vigor taking,
Set thy face toward things above;
Christ is here thy life to win,
And to free thee from all sin.

O my soul, feast on, believing,
Eat the bread and drink the wine,
In these tokens Christ perceiving,
Worship Him, and make Him thine;—

Then arise with grateful song
Since thou dost to Christ belong!

1908.

OUR FATHERLAND

"Thine eyes . . . shall behold the land that is very far off."

(Suggested by Zinzendorf's hymn, "Jesus, Still Lead On.")

Christ will lead us on
Till our life is done;
He from evil will defend us,
In all trials will befriend us,
Till our feet shall stand
In our Fatherland.

Christ will make our way
Bright as noon tide day;
He will ever walk beside us,
He will lead and He will guide us,
Till we reach the strand
Of our Fatherland.

Christ will give us cheer
E'en when foes are near;
With His strength He will surround us,
Yea, when doubt doth most confound us
He will point His hand
To our Fatherland.

Christ, in death's dark vale,
Will for us prevail;

By His arm He will sustain us,
In His peace He will maintain us,
Till the scenes expand
Of our Fatherland.

Christ will bring us where
We His joy shall share;
There His power will e'er uphold us,
There His love will e'er enfold us,
When our feet shall stand
In our Fatherland!

1908.

THE CALL OF THE EAST

"There are . . . many voices in the world."

Do you hear the East a-calling,
 Day by day?
Do you hear its plaint a-falling,
 Far away?
Crying out, since sore distress,
Pleading, pleading to be blest,
 Needy East to tardy West;—
 "Do not stay!"

See, the peach-trees high a-growing,
 Fresh and fair;
See, the cherry blossoms blowing
 Through the air;
Lo, the spices breathe forth balm,
Sweet the shade of fronded palm,
 In the bright, warm tropic calm,
 Over there.

Hark, the sound of merry laughter,
 Bright and clear,
Happy tale, and then the after
 Happier cheer;
Boys and girls with sparkling eyes,
Women showing glad surprise,
Men more grave, since gravely wise,
 Far and near.

But beneath the beauteous brightness,
 Dark and death,
And behind the heart's glad lightness,
 Bated breath;—
Ah, they bow to gods of stone
Which for sin can ne'er atone;
Hear ye not the cry and moan,
 As God saith?

Yea, the East is calling, calling
 'Cross the seas,
For the shadows are a-falling
 As life flees;
Dark the day, in spite of light,
Darker still the long-drawn night,
Shadows sinful souls affright,
 Such as these.

Coming, coming, I am coming,
 I'll not stay,
Love shall conquer fear benumbing,
 I'll away;—
Yea, the East shall meet the West,
Hear, O East, thou shalt be blest,
Jesus yet will give thee rest;
 Wondrous day!

THE WOODMAN'S SONG

"The trees . . . which the Lord hath planted."

Let all who will walk the city street
And gaze on the high house walls,
Their only music the beat of their feet
And the sound of the huckster's calls;
Give me the woods which the Lord has made,
With its vines and its leaves of green
And the birds a-carolling in the shade
And the glint of the sun's bright sheen.

Do you want a cathedral with towers and spires?
Do you look for a cloister dim?
Do you long for voices and virgin choirs,
And God—and a sight of Him?
Come out of the city which man has made
And dwell in the wild-wood fair
Beneath the trees of the glen and the glade—
You will find what you seek for there.

I grant that it's true that God does dwell
With men in the stone-built town,
And that He hears when the anthems swell
In cathedrals of great renown;
But I choose to worship in village church
And then to walk in the glade
Where you find God near, though you do not
search,
In the woods which His hands have made.

Oh, the wave in the corn in the clearing round
As it bends 'fore the summer breeze,
Oh, the shadows cast on the grass-clad ground
By the swaying limbs of the trees,

Oh, the arching branches above your head
And the long vines swinging by,
Oh, the sunlit leaves, some green, some red,
And the glimpse of the azure sky!

Oh, the soft, gray moss beneath your feet
And the near-by ferns, bright green,
Oh, the tunes of the song-birds, clear and sweet,
And the squirrel's sharp chatter between,
Oh, the soft, low voice of the babbling brook
As it glides through the glade and the glen;—
Ah, here is God's church, and here is a book
Which His hand has writ large for men!

Then make the city of stone your home
If such be your mind and choice,
But let me out in the wild-woods roam
Where my worshipping heart may rejoice;
Yea, let me abide 'neath the arching trees
With their heads held up to the sky;
And oh,—'neath their fallen, covering leaves
Do you lay me down when I die!

1908.

THE VIRGIN'S MEDITATION

"Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also."

The shadows fall on the silent earth
As the sun sinks low in the west,
And I hold my Babe of the heavenly birth,
His head laid soft on my breast;
Sleep, sleep, my Child;—aye, the shadows fall
And lie on the earth like a heavy pall!

The dove is making his sad lament
In the oak on the crest of the hill,
And the olive-trees, by the night-winds bent,
Sing a requiem, loud and shrill;
But sleep, my Child, sleep still and deep;—
It is not Thy time to lament and weep!

The wind blows cold from the great, wide sea,
And the waves beat hard on the shore;
Ah, I saw the lightning flash o'er Thee,
And hark, how the thunders roar;
Stir not, my Child, not yet is pain;—
But forgive if my teardrops fall like rain!

The night creeps on, the dark'ning night,
And my heart is o'erwhelmed with fear;
Hush, hush, my Child, soon cometh light,
And Thy Father is ever near;—
But God, O God, grant me Thy power
Till past is the pain of that awful hour!

1908.

THE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIRST PSALM

“Shall I lift up mine eyes unto the hills?”

Shall I lift up my longing eyes
Unto the hills around?
From whence shall come my needed help,
Where shall my aid be found?
From God, the Lord, come help and aid,
Who hath the earth and heaven made.

He will not let thy foot be moved,
For He that keepeth thee
Will never slumber, yea, the Lord
Will never weary be;
Lo, He that Israel's tribes doth keep
Shall never slumber, never sleep.

The Lord's thy keeper. Lo, He is
Thy shade on thy right hand,
Nor sun nor moon shall ever smite,
For He will by thee stand;
He shall preserve thee, and control,
Yea, He shall ever guard thy soul.

The Lord, in all thy going out,
In all thy coming in,
Shall keep thee safe from every harm,
Preserving thee from sin;
Yea, day and night, till life is o'er,
From henceforth, and forevermore!

1908.

A HEART WISH

"My heart's desire and prayer."

That I may know, yet more and more,
The love of God, whom I adore;
That I may be, increasingly,
The man that He would have me be;
That, loved and kept, I may find grace
To serve before Him, face to face;
And that, at last, my great reward
May be the "Well done!" of my Lord;
This is my wish;—may all beside
Be on yon cross, and crucified!

1908.

COMPENSATION

"Nevertheless, afterward!"

The year is slowly, sadly dying—
 Let it die!
Dead leaves on withered flowers are lying—
 Let them lie!
Were there no autumn, there would be no spring
And hearts midst springtime joys would never sing!

My life is surely, sadly ending—
 Let it end!
Its way toward death is swiftly tending—
 Let it tend!
Should earth not cease, then heav'n would not begin
And heaven's eternal joys I ne'er should win!

1908.

A QUESTION

"Pray without ceasing."

Just a glance above
And a half-breathed prayer,
Yet a Father's love
And a Father's care;—
Then why not pray by night and day
And have that love and care alway?

1908

ADORATION

"Great is our Lord, and of great power; his understanding is infinite."

(Lord Tennyson used to pray, in the great crises of his life: "O Thou Infinite; Amen!")

O Thou Infinite; Amen!—
God of all the sons of men,
Ever highest, and yet low,
Thou from whom compassions flow,
Bearer of Thy people's sin,
Seeking weary souls to win,
Welcomer of all who seek,
Strengthener of all the weak,
Comforter in sore distress,
Ready needy lives to bless,
Filling earth, as heaven above,
With infinitude of love,
Life of life and light of light,
Full of wisdom and of might,
Ruler o'er created things,
Lord of lords and King of kings,
Perfect in Thyself and ways,
Worthy of eternal praise,
Loved by the redeemèd host,
Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
We Thy triune Name confess,
Thee we supplicate and bless;
Worshipping, we say it then;
O Thou Infinite—Amen!

1908.

THE MINISTRY OF SUFFERING

"These are they which have come out of great tribulation."

(To a friend in the ministry, on the anniversary of the death of his beloved wife.)

There are those suff'ring without tears,
Whose faces wear the look that cheers,
Whose voices hold in every tone
The accent learned at heaven's throne,
Whose hands and feet in ministry
Show forth love's tend'rest sympathy,
Who, without consciousness or guile,
By thoughtful word and winsome smile,
Bring blessing to the sons of men
And comfort saddest hearts—e'en when
For them there is no light or love,
Save as these fall from heaven above,
And who their lonely way must tread,
While eyes see visions of the dead
And ears hear voices silent now,
And who beneath God's stroke must bow
Though hearts do break and break again
From overweight of hidden pain;
These are the saints who meekly go
Beside the Christ who walks below,
And these are they who, clothed in white,
Will walk with Him in realms of light
Through that long painless, wondrous day
When God has wiped all tears away!

1908.

A PARALLEL

"She laid him in a manger." "To give light to them that sit in darkness." "Until Christ be formed in you." "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Within the sky a God who gave,
Below on earth a stony cave,
Within the cave a mother mild,
Beside her there a new-born Child;—
And lo, that cave of darkest night
Illumined with a radiant Light!

A throne of grace in heaven above,
Upon the throne a God of love,
Below on earth a heart of sin
And Christ, by faith, re-born within:—
And lo, that heart of sinfulness
Turned into radiant holiness!

1908.

A CONFESSION

"I prayed to the Lord my God, and made confession."

Did I not know there is in heaven above
A God of wisdom and of changeless love,
In spite of all on earth which makes life glad,
I should be ever sad.

Life masters me, I cannot master it,
Before its problems I e'er helpless sit

Like witless dullard in a crowded school,
Confessed by all a fool.

Within my heart are longings infinite,
And yet, like fearful child in darksome night,
I start, I shrink, I grope but cannot find,
A child, indeed, and blind.

The more I seek, the more is mystery;
The dark e'er deepens in intensity;
I yearn for wisdom, light, for these I cry,
They stand far off, not nigh.

I grasp at substance, and I find it air;
I place my foot on rock, and naught is there;
I think high thoughts, they turn to foolishness
And add to my distress.

E'en love is e'er imperfect here below;
The fondest hopes are often turned to woe;
At heart of sweetest joy lies secret pain,
And life is loss, not gain.

Yea, I have seen life's ideals pass away,
As passes into night some brightsome day,
Till what is left is disappointment keen
For things which might have been.

I will not cease my quest, but this I see
There is no solving here of mystery;
I will pursue life's ideals, but I know
The best is not below.

Life, at its best, is brightness shadowed o'er;
Life, 'spite of life, lies ever on before;

Not here, but there in heaven, may hearts abide
Forever satisfied.

This, then, I've surely found—with God above
Is everlasting life, and light, and love;
And this, in spite of all that makes life sad—
 This keeps me ever glad!

1908.

RESURRECTION

"If a man die, shall he live again?" "The dead in Christ shall rise first."

(After seeing a butterfly in a garden.)

And so thou hast burst forth from place of death,
Enshrouded as thou wast, thou beauteous thing;
Wast thou made suddenly by God's sweet breath,
 With slender body and with radiant wing,
 Out of dark nothingness,
 This shadowy world to bless,
 With seven-hued colors bright,
 Like ray of glory-light?

Who could have thought on yesterday,
When thou didst lie like sodden clay,
That, in thy wrapped-up, dark cocoon,
There should have happened, and so soon,
This miracle of life and light?
As well imagine darksome night
 Could suddenly be day!—
 What, goest thou away,
 And higher up,
 From buttercup,
To white rose on the lifted stem?
Thou lookest like a flashing gem

Held fast at snow-white throat; only thy wings
Do pulsate in the very joy of things,
And show thou art not dead, as once before,
E'er God had opened wide the fast-closed door
Which held thy radiance in—thou wondrous thing,
Thou restless insect with the quivering wing!—

What, art thou not content
With thine environment?
Must leave the snow-white rose
To be the joy of those
Who, by their birth,
Love lower earth?
Dost fly to higher trees
Where hum the busy bees,
Seeking their honeyed dower
From newly bloss'ming flower?
There, weary insect, take thy rest,
And dip thy dark-hued, breathing breast
In the bright calyx where the fruit will be
When the same Hand hath wrought that fashioned
thee:
Now, thou dost glow with light;
No one could think that night
Once wrapped thee round
As one close-bound;
Thou dost with sunlight gleam
As if thou wert its beam,
Thyself the very light!—
What now? Another flight,
Still higher up? Wilt mount so high
That thou wilt touch the azure sky?
Where art thou now?—I only see
A faint-winged, throbbing flash of thee,
As thou art merged in seven-fold ray
Of the fair gleaming, glittering day;—
Ah, thou art wholly gone;
Thou didst to heaven belong,

God made thee for the skies,
So thou didst heavenward rise:

Good-bye,

Bright butterfly!

I too, a worm, shall turn to clay,
But I shall follow thee one day,

Thou happy thing,

Thou radiant insect with the outspread wing!

1908.

HEART GIFTS

"As he purposeth in his heart, so let him give."

It was not given me to pluck those flowers
Which grow within the palace-garden fair,
Blooming beside the winding, sunlit paths
And shedding fragrance on the balmy air;
These were reserved for better hands than mine,
For men, who nobler serve their Lord, the King,
That they may come in worthier way than I
In making Him their love's heart-offering.
And yet the Master granted me to pluck
Those wilder flowers, which, in the meadow wide—
Outside the garden—grow in hidden parts,
In verdant mead, or by the cool brook's side:
These have I gathered for my Master-Lord,
In willing toil, with earnest, tender hand,
And these I bring to Him, wild as they are, and
 small,
Mixed in with thorns, and tied with weedy strand;
For love's sweet gifts are not for e'er to be,
Full valued by the sense of smell and sight,
And He who reckons love the sweetest thing,
Will in this gift of mine take some delight;
And so unworthy as my gift must be,

Unworthy as I am to give at all,
I place it in the hands of Him I serve,
As suppliant at His blessed feet I fall:—
Then take, dear Master-Lord, this gift of mine,
These common flowers from out Thy meadow fair;
I give them Thee with all my heart's best love,
To mix their hue and scent with flowers more rare!

1908.

THE BIBLE

"Every scripture . . . is God-breathed."

The Book of books, holy, sublime, and true,
Spirit-inspired in every thought and word,
Revealing God, and Christ, as Savior-Lord,
Teacher of all that men should be and do;
A heavenly light within earth's midnight gloom,
A quickening life amidst death's dread decay,
A steadfast hand pointing the upward way,
A voice of triumph o'er the grave and tomb:

Here is a love which casts out every fear,
Here is a peace which sets the spirit free,
Here is a hope which gives the life good cheer,
And here are visions of the world to be;
Here then I rest;—and thus I ever may,
E'en when this heaven and earth have passed away!

1909.

“OUR FATHER”

“After this manner . . . pray ye.”

Our Father, which art in the heaven,
All hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done
In heaven and earth the same;
Give us this day our daily bread,
Forgive our debts, as thus
We also do forgive all those
Indebted unto us;
Lead not into temptation’s ways,
From evil-one deliver,
For Thine’s the kingdom, glory power,
Forever and forever:

Amen!

1909.

TO-DAY

“To-day, if ye will hear his voice.”

To-day is mine, not yesterday,
Nor yet the day to be,
I can not now retrace my way
Nor can I paths foresee,
But this one day is surely mine;—
O God, may it be wholly Thine!

No gift is mine which lies behind,
And none which lies before,
But in this present day I find
A full and precious store
Of all my life and heart can need—
With this, I am content indeed!

Then give me, Lord, to live to-day
Forgetful of the past
And of that unknown, future way
Which ends in death, at last—
That serving in one day alone
I may be, day by day, Thine own!

1909.

MISUNDERSTANDING

"Now I know in part."

I said in haste, The sun shines not to-day!
For I had gazed at the great, vaulted sky
Where God had set the lights to cheer the eye
And had seen naught but clouds, hence I did say
The light had failed;—yet back of cloudy lining
The sun, through all the day, was brightly shining!

I said in haste, God loves me not to-day!
For I had prayed that all my life might be
Hedged fast about, and so from sorrow free,
Hence, when dark sorrow came, I shrank away
And thought God's love had ceased;—yet Love's
denying
Costs more than granting, when sad souls are crying!

1909.

SACRIFICE

"He laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

Summer lilies, sweet and rare,
How they perfume all the air,
White as pure and pure as white,
Blooming through the day and night;
Lo, they stand in garden bed
Midst tall roses, crimson red.

Tell me, lilies, are you white
Since the roses weep at night,
Letting fall their tears of blood
Round your roots, a crimson flood;
Are you sweet and are you pure
Since their weeping doth endure?

Weep, red roses, weep and weep,
Through the nights your vigils keep,
If your watching, weeping long
Will the sweet and pure prolong;
Red for white and white from red—
This is as the Master said.

Roses red and lilies white,
Through the day and through the night,
Blooming ever side by side,
One by other beautified;
White from red—the red the sign
Of the Death that was Divine!

1909.

SORROW

"The Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow."

A blood-red lily lay upon the ground;
On yesterday it stood erect and tall,
Taller, by far, than all the flowers around
Where it was blooming near the garden wall;
It had sunk low beneath a driving rain,
So low, it seemed 'twould never rise again.

But on the morrow, as the sun came up
To dry the rain-tears from the weeping sky,
The lily lifted up its chalice-cup,
Taller, once more, than all the flowers near by;
Its bruised petals opened out again,
Fairer, by far, because of driving rain.

1909.

HOPE

"Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . which . . . hath given us good hope through grace."

Dark are the passing days,
Long are the narrowing ways,
And life is sad'ning;
But in the midst of all,
Whatever ills befall,
There is a glad'ning.

Again, and yet again
Hearts break because of pain,
Deep is life's sorrow;

And yet the pain departs
From sad and suffering hearts
On some to-morrow.

Weakness increases here,
Death hovers ever near,
Life has its ending;
Yet, 'spite of dimming eyes,
Faith sees the bright'ning skies,
God's love befriending.

Though darkness be as night
In darkness there is light,
Even in dying;
There is no place for fear,
God gives the heart good-cheer,
On Christ relying.

Then soul of mine be brave,
Christ will uphold and save,
His power sustaineth;
Whatever loss betide
Hope may fore'er abide
Since God remaineth.

1909.

TRANSFORMED

"He saith unto them, Follow me; . . . and they straightway left their nets and followed him."

(After seeing Zimmermann's picture, "Christ and the Fishermen.")

A single touch of a gentle hand,
A single word of a winsome voice,
And fishermen turned from sea to land
To follow a Stranger, by willing choice;
They left their nets by the sunlit sea
To walk in the deserts of Galilee.

The Master led them by dusty ways
And over the lonely mountain heights;
The sun beat hot through the lifeless days
And crowds pressed close through the long-drawn
nights;
They were bond-slaves now, where once they were
free,
But they ne'er turned back to their nets by the
sea.

They followed on to the city fair,
On Judah's heights with its walls and towers,
With its glittering temple in whitened square
Where priests said prayers through the countless
hours;
They went with their Master to Calvary,
And they clave to Him there in His agony.

They were left alone; but they still pressed on—
E'en as He' had said—to the distant lands,
Yea, on and on, till their strength was gone
And they sank to die on the desert sands;—
Ah, they never forgot blest Galilee
And the Voice and the Hand by the sunlit sea!

1909.

OLD AGE

"The path of the just . . . shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

I saw an old man pass our opened door,
His hair and beard were white as winter snow,
His halting feet moved painfully and slow,
He leaned his weight upon the cane he bore;
Old age its certain signs had o'er him cast,
The years had gone and life was almost past.

I pitied the old man, as thus I saw
His form go shambling by, with wearied tread—
Until I noticed that his whitened head
Was lifted up and that his gaze foresaw
A heavenly light, as, often, dying eyes
Are given to see beyond the cloud-veiled skies.

And then my pity turned from him to me,
The younger man who walks with firmer tread,
Who hurries on through life with bowed head,
Intent on what this earth gives one to see,
For blest is he, whatever age has come,
Who sees beyond the setting of life's sun.

So then I thank thee, agèd friend of mine,
That thou didst pass our door, that summer day,
Reminding me that life's declining way
Leads, 'spite of failing strength, to life divine;
Yea, may I follow thee, and, more and more,
Walk e'en as thou—with gaze fixed on before!

1909.

GOOD MORNING

"As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

Good morrow, Friend; God give thee cheer to-day;
Christ is thy Sun, and His light ne'er grows dim;
Put anxious thought and brooding care away
And greet each task with face upturned to Him;
So shalt thou find, whatever may betide,
Strength for each hour, and joy at eventide!

1910.

GOOD NIGHT

"The darkness hideth not from thee."

Good-night, dear Friend, and may thy sleep be
sweet,
God guardeth thee, so let all cares be gone,
Take thou thy peaceful rest, deep and complete,
Through all the darkened hours, till morning's
dawn;
Then may'st thou rise, in light of a new day,
To walk with Christ, thy life and strength and
stay!

1910.

LIFE

"He must increase, but I decrease."

Burn, thou candle, sure and slow,
Burn on downward, even so,
Shining, and fore'er consumed,
Wasting, and forever doomed,
Lasting through thy little night,
Going out at morning's light,
Having place, then put away,
Soon forgot in light of day;
Lower, lower, and now done;—
Shine thou, greater, brighter Sun!

1910.

REVELATION

"The entrance of thy words giveth light."

Blest Revelation, how thou dost set free
The mind from soul-destroying fearfulness,
Op'ning the eyes and giving them to see
The all-wise God, who doth with wisdom bless
The darkened heart, whate'er that darkness is,
Illumining the gloom with radiant light,
Which shines from out the other world to this
Until life's shadows take eternal flight;
Thou art the message of eternity,
Which art the words of the Eternal Word,
For thou alone dost speak in verity
And thou alone dost certainty afford;

Thou art the test of truth, wherever found,
In works of God, of man, in nature, art,
From thought's beginning to its utmost bound,
From throne of God to neediest human heart;
Thou speakest once, and from that moment's time
There is no need that man should speak again;
Thou speakest yet again, and words sublime
Have made deep mysteries forever plain;
And so in thee the soul in sinful breast
May find the words which will forever save,
And so on thee the weary heart may rest,
Whether it be the heart of king or slave;
Here, only here, is life's philosophy,
For here there speaks a voice which is divine,
And only here, is highest prophecy,
Since here is God, in every word and line:—
Here then, I stand, let others take their way,
As seemeth to them good, in search of truth,
Blest Revelation turns my night to day
And gives my dying soul eternal youth;
And what it does not give, at present, here
I do not need, at present, here to know
For what has not been said, I could not bear,
And God, in other world, will yet bestow;
So then, be this my choice, for all the days,
To humbly search this Truth, with 'tense delight,
Acknowledging to man, by words and ways,
That entrance of this Wisdom giveth light!

1910.

SELF-LOVE

"He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."

Narcissus—so the ancient fable runs—
Was, 'mongst the heavenly ones, the fairest god,
With face as full of light as seven suns,
With foot as fleet as e'er touched grassy sod;
His home was in the skies where gods do dwell,
And yet to visit earth pleased him full well.

The goddesses within the upper sphere
Wooed this fair god through many a golden day;
But to all these he gave a heedless ear,
And from their tender pleadings turned away;
They yearned to make him theirs, in sweetest
grace;—
His only answer was a scornful face.

And when he came to earth, some nymph or faun
Would follow him in wood or through the field;
But he would flee till suitor would be gone,
Nor would he e'er to love's entreaties yield;
They sought to win him;—he was well content
To live apart, on his own pleasures bent.

And thus Narcissus, loved but loving not,
Wandered alone, his heart estranged from all;
Until at last, by one and all forgot,
He 'gan to think what heart he might enthrall;
When suddenly, he found that none did care
To hear his tale, or his late love to share.

At this, disconsolate, he turned aside—
Ashamed to seek the gods who dwell above—
To forest deep and lone, to there abide
And there to search for beauty and for love;



And so it was, in lonely wandering,
He came across a flowing, sparkling spring.

Here, sad and weary, seeking needed rest,
He stretched himself upon the verdant grass,
When, drinking from the spring—his face close
 prest—

He saw himself as in a burnished glass;
Such winsome beauty his transfixèd eyes
Had never seen before, in earth or skies.

He had but loved himself;—now he began
To love himself as not in all the past;
Toward that fair image all his soul outran
Until its wondrous beauty held him fast;
 And there he gazed upon it, day by day,
 Fearing to rise lest it should pass away.

Days come and go; nights pass as do the days;
Years run their course; and yet, in spite of fears,
Narcissus lingers on, and often prays
That he may linger still through other years;
 And, blinded by his love, he ne'er espies
 How light is fading from his face and eyes.

Thus came the day when wasted strength did fail,
When the fair head sank lower, lower down,
When love of self no longer could avail,
Yea, when self-love did god-like beauty drown;
 For there, at last, Narcissus lay quite dead,
 His love departed and his beauty fled.

No gods came down to bear his soul away;
No nymphs drew near to raise up mound or bier;
Unloving all, unloved by all, he lay
A fallen god, doomed thus to disappear;—

From out his dust a death-like flower upcame
To witness to his folly and his shame.

I called the story fable;—nay, 'tis true;
True of all souls who turn away from those
Who fain would love them, and who them pursue
With tokens of sweet love at heart's dispose;
For loving self so well, to latest breath,
They love themselves, at last, to loveless death!

1910.

DISCONTENT

"For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance which the Lord God giveth you."

My heart is full of discontent
Because of earth's environment;
I seek for good of perfect kind
But perfect good I cannot find;
Sweet is this life, and large its worth,
But hearts are never satisfied on earth.

I've tested all things 'neath the sky
Which searching mind and heart may try;
This is the sum, that searchings mean
Failure and disappointment keen;
Nowhere on earth may soul find rest
Since all on earth is less than best.

And hence I turn from all below
To what the Lord will soon bestow,
In other world, past shining star,
Where He, and saints, and angels are;

Ay, there, in heaven's environment,
I'll find God's best, and be content!

1910.

A CRY

"The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth."

Some say 'tis certain truth that the first cry,
As every following cry, of new-born babe,
Is sweetest music to the ears of her
Who hath the travail borne in mother love;
For these assure us that the ears of such
Do hear, beyond the sharpness of the cry,
The tones of a glad, loving, trustful song
Which childhood voices for the help of one
Who counts it joy to hearken and to give.
I dare not say whether this word be true,
But this I know and gratefully affirm
That as my cry has risen up to God
It has awakened such harmonious strains
Of answering love-songs o'er His needy one
As makes me sure beyond a passing doubt
That e'en my sharpest cry was to that heart
Itself a love-song, set to music sweet.
Then, Lord, as I have need, I can but cry
E'en though petition be a bitter plaint;
For what can childhood do, when need has
come,
But turn, with cry, to Thee, the Father-
God?
And so, my Lord, this I would ask of Thee
That Thou wilt ever hear within my voice,
As often as I come and as I cry,
The song of its adoring, tender love,

For did I love Thee not, I ne'er should
come,
And, coming not, I ne'er should cry at all!

1910.

SURPRISE

"When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock."

Joseph wrought upon his tomb,
Thinking of the hour when he,
Passing through death's agony,
Would, at last, meet life's dread doom;
Stroke on stroke his mallet fell—
Breaking his sad heart as well.

Now the tomb is finished quite
With the chisel marks in view;
Ne'er again can life be new,
Day is passing into night,
Naught before but fleeting breath
And the lying still in death.

See the crowds around the cross,
Lo, the flash of piercing spear,
Bowed the head of Victim dear
Who endured the pain and loss;
Oh, the blood which hath been shed;—
Who will bury this God's Dead?

Near at hand a rock-hewn tomb,
'Neath the shelter of the hill,
Waiting empty there, until
Hands shall bear Him through the gloom,
Bear Him gently to the grave
Who hath given His life to save.

Now, He lies all wrapped in white,
With the chisel marks around;
Where can such a tomb be found,
All aglow with heavenly light?
Dead—yet Lord of life is He,
This the God of victory.

Joseph, Joseph, sad of heart,
Thou who wrought in pain and fear,
Shedding many a blinding tear,
Honored above men thou art;—
Seeing naught but rock-hewn dome,
Thou hast made thy God a Home!

1910.

LOVE

"Keep yourselves in the love of God."

As little children on a springtime day,
When the fair sun is promising that soon
The winter's night will turn to summer's noon
Bask in the light and seek to catch each ray,
So would I keep myself in that sweet love
Which falls from heaven above.

And too, as children follow the bright light
From house to street, from street to country lane,
Seeking its warmth, again and yet again,
Through the long day, till day has ta'en its flight,
So would I seek the sunshine of God's love
Wherever it may move.

Ay, and as children cry aloud in pain
When 'cross the sun there passes dark'ning cloud,
Shrinking aback as from a dead man's shroud
And crying more if darksome cloud remain,
So may that sin to me most grievous prove
Which overshadows love.

Lord, grant me love; for this I pray and long,
Warm, glowing love from Thine out-shining heart;
With it I live; I die if it depart;
With it I live to follow and be strong;—
And oh, may I, as angels are above
Be loved that I may love!

1910.

EASTER DAY

"That I may know . . . the power of his resurrection."

The Lord is risen;—
I must arise
And seek His face
In upper skies;
I will not turn
To cross or grave,
He lives above
Who died to save.

The crocus flower
In garden bed
Has lifted up
Its spotless head.
It raised its face
Toward gleaming sun
Before the day
Had well begun.

The song-birds flit
From hedge to trees
To fill with song
The morning's breeze;
Hark, to the burst
Of sweet accord
As they unite
To praise earth's Lord:

And borne on air,
In rhythmic time,
There sounds the beat
Of tuneful chime,
As pealing bells
In steeple high
Ring, "Christ is risen,"
To earth and sky.

Then, rise, my soul,
Seek Christ above,
The Lord of light
And life and love;
The cross is past,
No more death's pain,
Christ lives fore'er,
Fore'er to reign!

BOND SERVICE

"A bond-slave of Jesus Christ."

Thou art my King, O Christ; I am Thy slave;
Since Thou hast bought me, I am all Thine own;
It is for Thee to reign, I would not crave
A single right before Thy royal throne;
If thus I be from every gift debarred
Let me not slack, nor in my service faint;
If Thou shalt smile, be this my great reward;
If Thou should'st chide, I would not make com-
plaint;
Nor would I seek to know the why or how,
Since 'tis for Thee to ask whate'er Thou wilt;
This I would choose, to listen and to bow
And then to do, till task be all fulfilt:
One only thing I beg, by Thy great grace,
E'en as I serve—to look upon Thy face!

1910.

A DREAMER

*"Your young men shall see visions, and your old
men shall dream dreams."*

(It used to be said of the Reverend J. Hudson Taylor that he was a mystic, a visionary, a dreamer.)

An unknown dreamer dreamed concerning men,
And what he saw in vision came to pass,
For he, by faith, had stood on sea of glass
And heard the Voice, and then had said, Amen!

Thereat, he quickly turned from heaven to earth,
The light of glory burning in his eyes,
To speak what he had heard within the skies,
To preach redemption through the heavenly birth:

And so he saw what God saw from His throne,
And thus he wrought according to God's plan,
And thence through years, though oft rejected, lone,
He voiced God's message to his fellow man:
The dreamer died; they laid him 'neath the sod;—
But now a countless host adores his God!

1910.

PARTED

"Until—the shadows flee away!"

(Sent to one who had recently lost his beloved wife.)

The Master led us by the meadow path,
Through the sweet smelling green of springing grass,
Beside a stream whose waters shone like glass,
'Midst fragrant flowers—the meadow's aftermath;
There my dear love oft plucked the daisies gay,
Of which I made bright garlands for her hair;
Each hour she looked a new-decked bride, so fair
That, yearningly, I followed day by day:

And so the Master led us through the field
Toward His fair palace gleaming on the hill,
And so glad pleasures each new day did yield
As we sang love-songs, till our song was still;
Then came a sharp, hard road, and then the gate;
The Master took her in;—He bade me wait!

1910.

FAREWELL

"I shall go to him but he shall not return to me."

(In memory of a Japanese friend who was greatly beloved.)

Out of the woods comes a cry of pain,
It rises and falls in a sad refrain,
And out of the shadow of fir and pine
Come mourners who walk in a long, slow line;
And they bear the body of one I knew,
Of one I have loved as I've loved but few.

They carry him down to the river side,
To a boat afloat on the ebbing tide,
They lay him down in the lifted bow,
With his face upturned to the arching prow;—
Ah, his face looks pained in the evening light
For it bears the marks of a hard-fought fight.

Outward and outward the river flows
And outward and outward the long-boat goes,
Toward the trackless deep and the setting sun,
Far into the west where the night's begun,
And, watching, I stand on the lonely shore
Till the outspread sails can be seen no more.

I bow my head, and I weep and weep
For my heart is out on the shrouded deep,
Where the boat is afloat and his body lies
With its white, scarred face and its fast-closed eyes;
And I wonder if yonder, beyond the night,
He has found a port in the land of light.

"Farewell, dear comrade!" 'twas thus I had cried
As the boat had sailed on the flowing tide;—
But never a word had my comrade said
As he lay all quiet with pillow'd head;
And all I had heard, midst the mourner's cry,
Was the beat of my heart, and the night wind's
sigh.

So here I now stand with my eyes intent
On the night and the dark where his loved form
went;
And here I will wait till they come for me
To carry my body across the sea;—
And this is my hope, for his soul and mine,
That the hand on the helm is the Hand Divine!

1910.

HOME BOUND

"Absent from the body, at home with the Lord."

'Tis a long, long way to my waiting home,
And the roadway is rough and steep,
And few are the smiles in the weary miles
While there's many a chance to weep;
But on at the end of the long, rough way
There's a door which is opened wide,
And the day will come, at some set of sun,
When I'll enter to there abide.

'Tis a desolate road I am travelling on
For the crowd does not pass this way,
And the heart oft longs for the heartening songs
Of those who make holiday;

But, on beyond, in the home on the hill,
There are faces I love more dear,
So I take my way, through the long-drawn day,
To its welcome and holier cheer.

The daylight fades as I journey along
And shadows are deepening around,
And I sometimes fear as the night draws near
For pitfalls and dangers abound;
But this is my joy along the hard way,
Whatever the shadows portend—
The darker the night, the brighter the light
In my home at my journey's end.

So then I'll go on with never a pause,
Whatever my sorrows may be,
Yea, nothing shall stay my journeying way
Till the distant portal I see;
And when I shall stand 'neath its shelter, at last,
At rest in my blessed abode,
I'll praise, without end, my heavenly Friend
For the home at the end of the road!

1910.

DEATH

"To depart and be with Christ, for it is very far better."

The fingers of the Lord were downward laid,
Gently, but firmly, on the upturned eyes;
The soul shrank back, bewildered and afraid,
And cried for life, o'erwhelmed by death's surprise;—

Just then, bright visions burst upon the sight
And that sad soul was 'raptured with delight.

Those sore bereft drew near the flower-decked bier,
And, weeping, laid the body 'neath the sod;
They spoke, and wished their loved one back, and
near,
And mourned to have to bow 'neath stroke of
God;—
Their loved one mourned no more, for, far above,
He walked with Christ, in ecstasy of love!

1910.

CHAOS

"The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain."

A great and loving God on heaven's throne,
A Savior-Christ expectant at His side,
The Holy Spirit seeking for His own
And pointing upward to the crucified;
Yet Satan ruling souls without restraint,
Seeking the whole, wide world of men to win;
A few believers, struggling on, and faint,
And multitudes far-wand'ring in their sin;
Sickness, decay and death in every place,
Sorrow and anguish, with sad moaning, tears;—
In heaven, a plenitude of love and grace,
But judgment near, and hearts o'erwhelmed with
fears!

1911.

COSMOS

"He hath made everything beautiful in his time."

A tiny insect nestling near the ground,
The waving grass above, all fresh and green
Midst grass, a cattle-herd, with sheep around,
And trees and flowers nearby to deck the scene;
About, green hills, down which bright streamlets
flow,
And snow-capped mountains, reaching to the sky;
O'erhead, great birds a-winging to and fro,
And in heaven's blue, the white clouds sailing by;
In distant space, bright worlds on flaming wing,
Which pass where angel-feet alone have trod;
On earth, meek men, redeemed and worshipping;
And over all, the blest Creator-God!

1911.

A COMPARISON

"Comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

I walked one spring-time morn through meadow path,
My head thrown back, my step alert and true;
Sweet flowers bedecked the meadow's aftermath,
The song-birds sang their matins midst the dew;
And, as I reached the highway hard and firm,
Dismounting from the stile, with whistled tune,
I placed my heedless foot upon a worm
And crushed its life out—that bright morn in June;
But what cared I? All life was glad and gay;
And so I whistled still, and went my way.

I crossed the stile into the field one night,
When all the world was still, anear, afar;
Above me was the vasty, heavenly height,
And all was dark, save for a flickering star;
How infinite was space; how small was I;
How awful was the silence, far and near;
I seemed no man beneath that vaulted sky;
I stood transfixed, my heart o'erwhelmed with fear;
And then I cried:—"I've sinned for I've forgot;
Great God, I'm but a worm; oh, crush me not!"

1911.

COMMISSIONED

"As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

Out from the realm of the glory-light
Into the far-away land of night,
Out from the bliss of worshipful song
Into the pain of hatred and wrong,
Out from the holy rapture above
Into the grief of rejected love,
Out from the life at the Father's side
Into the death of the crucified,
Out of high honor and into shame
The Master, willingly, gladly came:—
And now, since He may not suffer anew,
As the Father sent Him so sendeth He you!

1911. ,

DISCIPLESHIP

"These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth."

I thought it hard that Christ should ask of me
To walk through life along a blood-marked way,
And thus it was, I shrank back, tremblingly,
Then paused, and bowed my head, and said Him,
 Nay!

But looking down I saw, with tear-dimmed eyes,
That all the blood-marks came from piercèd feet,
At which I learned, with sad yet glad surprise,
That they were proofs of love, enduring, sweet;
'Twas thus again I looked on Christ's dear face,
And once again began to follow on;—
Since then I've only thought of His great grace,
And fear of blood-marked ways is wholly gone.

1911.

A PURITAN

"There was a man sent from God."

He did not live in times long since gone by,
When men, for sake of truth, left home and lands
And builded other homes, 'neath foreign sky,
While some stood guard against wild, hostile bands;
He lived—not mindless of that hardy past—
In these more easy, lifeless days of ours,
When gone are rugged sacrifice and fast
And wealth leads men to live with aimless hours;

When learning speaks of sacred things with sneers,
When science holds religion commonplace,
When new-born faiths dispell the old-time fears
And culture takes the place of heavenly grace;
When sacred doctrines hid within the Word,
Loved by the fathers dearer far than life,
Are lightly held, are seldom taught or heard
And then are yielded up—lest there be strife;
Yea, in these days he lived, one 'mongst the few,
Revering Holy Word, as he was taught,
Believing it God-breathed, divinely true,
Holding its wisdom 'fore all human thought;
Seeing therein the Christ, as Man and God,
Trusting His power to save and keep from sin,
Walking the blood-marked way which saints have
trod,
Keeping the Spirit's flame all bright within;
Dwelling in midst of worldlings, but apart,
Pure and high-minded, seeking joys above,
Serving mankind with willing hand and heart
And giving those most needy, most of love;
And yet, through all, as touching compromise,
A Puritan, though scoffed at o'er and o'er;
Yielding respecting self—but, otherwise,
As firm as granite rock on wave-beat shore!

1911.

CONFIDENCE

"I . . . am persuaded that he is able to keep."

Suppose you knew this day would be the last
That you would spend upon this old-time earth;
What would you do—cry out, and pray, and fast,
Put work aside, and every thought of mirth,

And then give up your soul to dread and fear,
And so meet Death with bitter moan and tear?

Or, would you nerve your heart to meet that hour
As stoics did, in days before Christ came,
And so forget that sin has endless power
To bring the sinful life to endless shame;
And then would you, your heart-fears to defy,
Laugh in mad mirth—until grim Death stood by?

As God would give me grace, I should not choose
To meet my last day thus, but otherwise;
Mindful of sin, I yet should hope to lose
All thought of sin, through Christ's great sacri-
fice;—
Then, I should seek to turn to work or play
Just as I might on any other day!

1911.

WORDS

"Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing; . . . these things ought not so to be."

I spoke a cruel word
To one who heard;
Within that heart
It lodged like poisoned dart
And that one mourned the morn
When I was born.

I spoke a word of love,
From God above,
To one sore tried,
And, though that one still cried,
He blessed the happy day
I passed that way.

1912.

AMBITION

"We make it our ambition that . . . we may be accepted of him."

To please the Lord, from day to day,
In all I am and do and say;
To keep His image 'fore my eyes
And wear its form without disguise;
To walk in gladness, yet in fear,
With heart firm fixed, with vision clear;
To face temptations and to stand,
To do the duty next at hand;
To be man's slave in word and deed
And serve him most who most has need;
To live, to die—the vict'ry won—
And hear the Master say, "Well done!"
This be my choice, through all my days,
Till strife be turned to heaven and praise!

1912.

ENCOURAGEMENT

"His heart was encouraged in the ways of the Lord."

My Soul, there is a country
To which thou'rt going fast,
A sweet and blessed country
Where sweet and blessing last;
Then cheer thee, Soul, take courage,
The way is not for long,
A little, and the sighing
Will change to joy and song!

1912.

ENTHRONED

"He is the Lord of lords and King of kings."

(After hearing an address to Christians in which they were urged to make Christ King and in which the speaker closed by saying: "Which shall it be for Him; a cross or a throne?")

They followed Him close, the rabble crowd,
And they pressed upon Him with shoutings loud,
As He walked in their midst, His meek head
bowed—
The Master of Galilee;
And few were the friends that He had that day
As He traversed the hard and tortuous way
Through frowning gate to the hill-top gray,
To die on the cruel tree.

They nailed Him there and they raised Him high,
They put Him to shame 'tween the earth and sky,
He asked for no mercy by word or cry—

 He was dying for you and me;
And they stood and mocked Him, the rabble throng,
With jeering and hissing and ribald song,
Yea, they taunted Him sore, who had done no
 wrong,
 As He suffered on Calvary.

They eagerly watched Him till day was past,
Till the sky with darkness was overcast,
Till his head hung low on His breast, at last,
 Who was dying to set men free;
Ah, He could not deliver Himself, they said,
Because He endured and willingly bled;
And so they reviled Him, and left Him dead—
 A King in His majesty!

Oh, would I had been in the crowd that day
To follow Him on to the hill-top gray
And to take His part, whate'er they might say,
 Who gave up His life for me;
For I would have hailed Him a King e'en then—
The thorn-crowned Savior of sinful men—
And have bowed the knee, again and again,
 As He died in His agony!

But the day is past and the crowd has gone
And silent the jeer and the ribald song
And a crown and a throne to the King belong,
 Who suffered so willingly;
Yet I do what I can in a hostile land
For here in the midst of the throng I stand
And I raise my voice and I lift my hand
 In pledge of my loyalty;

And I vow in the light of yon bright sun
I will seek to undo the wrong that was done
When they put Him to shame, God's holy Son,
 On Calvary's cursèd tree;
Yea, as long as I live my praise I'll sing
And as long as I live my gifts I'll bring,
To Him whom I've throned in my heart as King—
 The Christ of all victory!

1914.

CHOSEN

"For the Master's use."

(To a father and mother who had lost a beloved child.)

The gardener tended his garden fair
With patient toil and with brooding love,
In the glowing sun and the balmy air
And the showers which fell from the heaven above;
And the flowers upsprang 'neath his skilful hand,
The fairest and sweetest in all the land.

The jasmine bloomed by the flowing spring
And the sweet-brier flowered on the old stone wall
And beside the mill—with its broken wing—
The sun-flowers glowed, erect and tall,
While near the path where the lilacs grew
Were bright-eyed pansies of many a hue.

And fairer yet, in the garden bed,
Were lilies white, and radiant phlox,
And fairest of all, there were roses red
In an emerald ring of stately box—

And there on the rose-tree, in leafy green,
Was the reddest rose that was ever seen.

The lord of the garden passed that way
And greeted the gardener with kindly smile,
And he paused to look at the rich display,
While he stood and leaned 'gainst the garden stile,
And he wondered that hand could bedeck the
ground
With so fair a sight as he saw around.

And then he looked at the garden bed,
At the lilies white and the radiant phlox,
At the rose-tree green with its roses red
A-bloom in its ring of emerald box,
And then at the red-rose, wondrous fair,
Which swung on its stem in the stirring air.

And the lord of the garden gladly smiled,
And he called to the gardener to bend his knee
And to cut the rose his hand had beguiled—
The bright-red rose on the red-rose tree—
For the garden was his and all that was there,
And its fairest flower was his right to wear.

The gardener bowed his old gray head
And he slowly and painfully bent his knee
And he cut from its stem the rose bright-red,
With never a pause, at his lord's decree,
And then he arose from the garden-sand
And he laid the flower in his master's hand.

But he trembled sore and his eyes were dim
And his heart beat fast, and he spoke no word
And he turned to his work with his visage grim
And the songs of the birds he no longer heard;—
For of all the flowers in the garden fair
That flower had had his tenderest care.
But the lord of the garden wore that night
The rose on his heart in his castle-hall
And the lords and ladies, with flowers bedight,
Said the bright-red rose was the fairest of all;—
And the lord of the castle never forgot
How his old gray gardener had faltered not!

1914

SONGS

“Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

The king's decree had gone forth through the land,
Calling the master-singers to the court,
To there display their noble art of song
And thus compete for prize of golden crown:
And so the call had reached to even me,
Poor as I was, and biding in my hut
Deep in the wood-land, far from haunts of men;
For my beloved brother, man-at-arms,
In brother love and pride, had told his squire
That I could sing like lark at early morn,
And the kind squire had written down my name
Upon the list; and so the call had come.

On certain day, therefore, I set my feet
Along the wood-land road, toward castle-court,
Care-free, and vying with the feathered tribe
Which sang from tree and hedge-row as I passed;

And thus I traversed on, out from the wood,
And came to village lanes, and then to streets
Of a great city, filled with jostling crowds,
All pressing toward the hill and castle-gate;
But there my song died all away, and I
Should soon have turned about and sought my home
Had not my brother met me, forcing me
To follow him, e'en to the castle hall,
Wherein I stood, trembling and sore abashed,
My homespun like to rags in such array
Of silk and satin gowns, of doublet, hose,
Of tapestry, of carpet, and of throne.

But soon the songs began; and then I lost
All sense of fear, and stood transfix'd,
Listening to voice on voice, each better than
The voice which only now had caught the ear
And ravished heart and soul. And on they sang,
Men, women, full a score, all richly dressed
And masters of themselves though there in court,
Fearing no face, not e'en the face of king:
And as they sang, they spoke of tilt and lance,
Of brave crusades, of great and bloody wars,
Of lords and ladies fair, of lovers true,
And too, most often, of their lord, the king,
Praising his person and his gracious ways:
And then there came a pause;—when, all at once,
I heard the herald cry, voicing my name,
In accents which, at first, seemed far away
And then like drum-beats on my startled ears;
At which the throng looked round, both here and
there,
For other lord or lady—till the squire
Took hold upon my hand and led me forth,
Up to the throne, and left me 'fore the king.

I heard them laugh—the crowd which stood behind—

Laugh at my homespun dress, my braided hair,
My sun-tanned face and hands, my dusty feet,
Till heart beat fast, till blood suffused my cheek,
Till tears o'erran my eyes, till, trembling sore,
I should have fallen in unconscious faint
Had I not looked into the face of him
Who sat upon the throne and kindly smiled;
At this I thought of God and His dear Christ,
And then I folded hands across my breast
And bowed my head and prayed, when suddenly
A great, sweet peace took hold upon my heart;—
I seemed in wood-land midst the singing birds,
I heard the murmuring brook, I felt the breath
Of perfumed zephyr blowing on my cheek,
And God was very near, as was His wont
Whene'er I walked with Him in wood-land glens;
And then I sang, free, unrestrained, to Him
Who only is the Lord, the King of kings:

High are the castle walls,
High are its vaulted halls,
 But heaven is higher;
Nigh are its knights who dare,
Nigh are its ladies fair,
 But God is nigher:

Rare are its glittering gems,
Rare are its diadems,
 But heaven is rarer;
Fair are its choirs that sing,
Fair is its gracious king,
 But Christ is fairer:

Christ is the ever high,
Christ is for ever nigh,
 Nearer and nearer;
Christ is supremely rare,
Christ is the only fair,
 Dearer and dearer!

At which my singing ceased, and I shrank back
To shadowed corner, hiding in the crowd.

A silence fell upon the gathered throng
And every eye was fixed upon the king,
Who sat with head bowed down and knitted brow,
Bethinking who deserved the golden crown:
At last he spoke—the singers drawing near
But I the farther shrinking out of sight—
His vibrant voice a-trembling through the hall
And each word coming forth in measured tone:
“My lords and ladies, you will ‘gree with me
It is no easy task to full decide
Which voice has best expressed sweet melody
Where all have sung with perfect tune and art;
Indeed, sweet singers, I must thank you all
And praise without restraint each well-trained voice:
And yet, methink, where song is at its best
There must be other test than that of art;
That eye and look, that attitude and grace,
And, most of all, that choice of thought and word
Must be the final proof;—and so I give
This crown of purest gold to none of these
Who sang of lordly men, who sang of me,
But to the lowly maid, who, in our midst,
Did bow the head in prayer, and then, who sang
In praise of Christ—who only is the King!”
At that he called me forth, and, from the throne,
He put the circled gold upon my brow.

Full fast I took my way to the great church
Which stands beside the castle on the hill,
And, never pausing in its stately nave,
I passed by choir and throne to the high steps
And 'fore the brazen cross laid down the crown;
And then I turned my face toward distant home,
Through streets to lanes, through lanes to wooded
glens,

The songs a-coming back the farther on
I walked in deeps of woods, beside the streams,
Till heart was free once more, till I forgot
All at the distant court, except its king.
And thought of naught beside—to God be praise!—
But of the heavenly court and Christ its Lord:

And then again I dwelt in shady glens
And sang my songs of praise with singing birds!

1914.

KING DAVID

*"The swallow (hath found) a nest for herself,
where she may lay her young, even thine altars,
O Lord of hosts."*

The great king David sat upon his throne,
Within his palace, at Jerusalem;
Around him stood his servants, all intent,
And courtiers too, awaiting his command,
While all about him was magnificence,
The sign of kingly state and royal wealth
For 'mong the nations, there was none so great
As this, who once was but a shepherd-boy,
Whom God had lifted from his lowly place
To make him, in his time, earth's king of kings.

And yet, this day, king David's heart was sad
For, 'spite of all his royal state and power,
There was within his spirit that unrest—
To which magnificence can bring no peace—
Which comes from loss of fellowship with God.
'Twas thus that David called for his loved harp,
The one which, long ago, on Bethlehem's plains,
While watching, faithful, o'er his father's sheep,
He oft had played to soothe away his fears;
And thus it was he deftly touched its strings,
Till trembling music woke the echoes round,
'Neath archèd doors and through long corridors,
Filling the palace with its vibrant strains,
Which, shortly after, his sonorous voice
Made even more melodious with its song.

But, somehow, on this day, sweet melody
Failed to bring calm as in the days of yore;
So, sighing deeply, David ceased to sing,
And, presently, ceased also his deft play;
When, calling all to leave him quite alone,
He flung himself upon his damasked couch
And bowed his head upon his outstretched arms,
Weary and sad, his longings unfulfilled.

While thus the great king lay, disconsolate,
He heard upon the pavement in the street
The sound of pilgrim feet. Then he recalled
That this was one of Israel's holy days,
When worshippers went up to temple courts
To there perform their vows before the Lord;
At this, the king arose, and, presently,
Most humbly clad, and all unlike a king,
He joined the pilgrims, walking on with them,
To seek for peace and heart-rest with his God.

Thus, in a little, having passed the vale
And reached the temple courts upon the hill,
He stood, with all the people, worshipping,
Joining the choral chant led by the priests
And answ'ring all the prayers with loud, Amen!—
And there he stood, till all the people passed
And chant and prayer were still, the worship
o'er—

A sorrowing man, for e'en in temple courts
The sadness in his heart was 'biding still,
Since what he longed for, sought, was unobtained.

The evening sun, e'en as he stood, went down
And deep'ning shadows fell athwart the day,
When, hearing the loud sound of clanging doors
And knowing that the temple was now closed,
King David raised his downcast head and looked
Far up above the temple to the skies.

As he did this, he suddenly discerned
A little swallow circling round and round
And drawing nearer in her daring flight
To the great altar, facing which he stood:
Astonished at the sight, he gazed intent,
Half-wond'ring if heaven's fire would not con-
sume

The impious bird, which now was settling down
Upon the altar's horn, where—gazing still—
He saw that she had fixed her new-made nest
And so had reared her young, full trustingly.
The fire fell not. Instead, the evening shades
Closed softly round the bird and all her young,
Till, nestling there together, chirping ceased,
And all within the night was still and calm.
At this king David looked above once more,
And saw the old-time moon and stars still set,
In shining benediction, near God's throne.

The king let fall his head upon his breast
And then through silent streets he softly passed
Till he had reached his palace and his couch;
There he fell down, upon his very face,
And cried for mercy to the living God,
Confessing many sins, and this the chief
That he, God's chosen, had so soon forgot
The love which takes the weary sinner in,
The love which pardons every wandering;
At which, he told God of his heart's unrest
And asked for His forgiveness and for peace.

As David lay, the palace lights grew dim,
Till, flickering low, they went out, one by one,
Leaving the palace full of midnight gloom;—
But in the gloom a king had found his rest
Within the altar-heart of Israel's God!

1916.

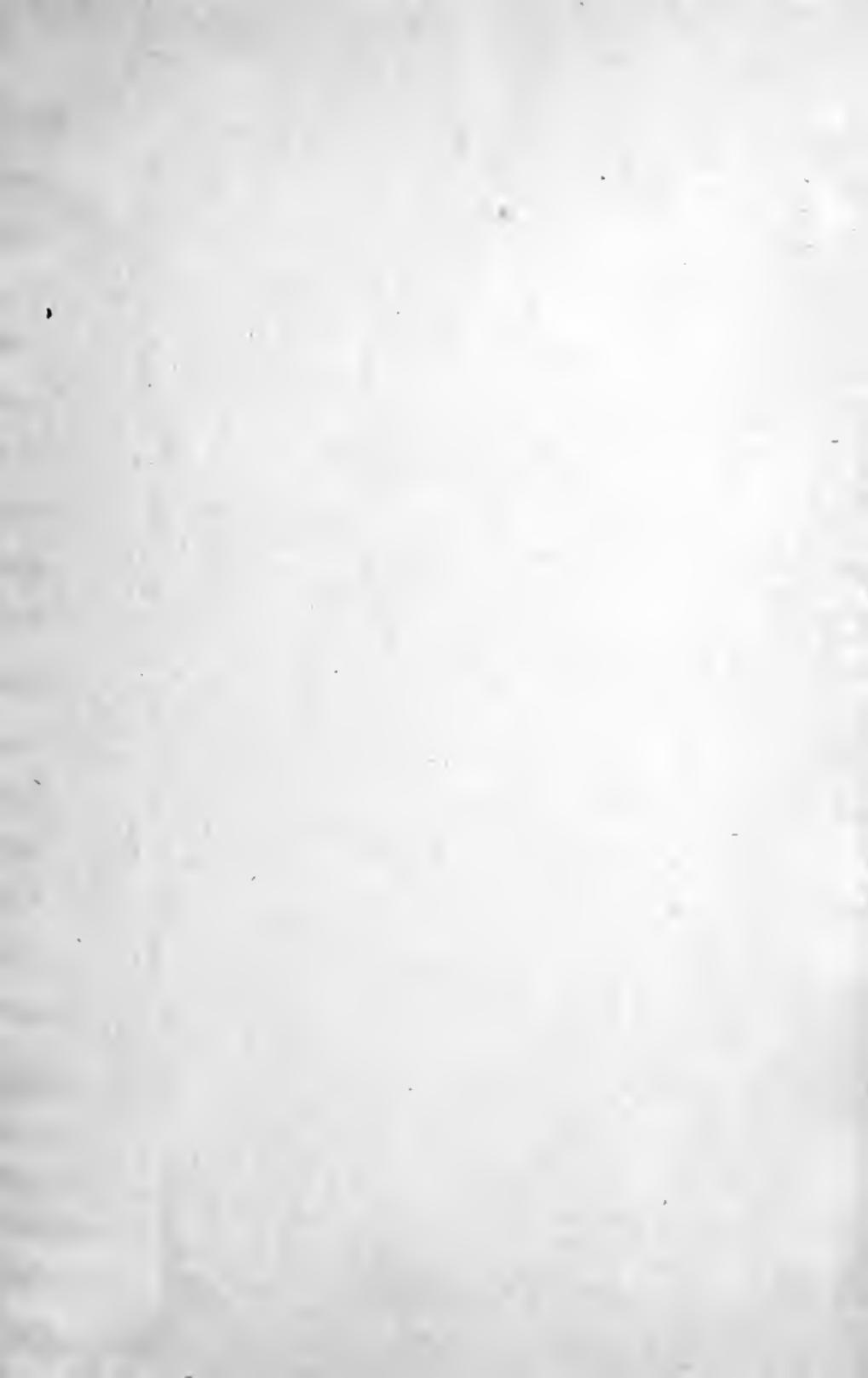


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